NATION

Cyclone Fengal: 2,000 acres of crops ruined in TN rains

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BUSINESS

Adani stocks zoom up to 20% as firm denies charges

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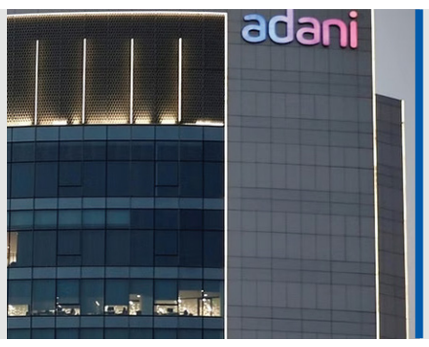

SPORTS

Gukesh outplays Liren on time in Rd3 for first win in WC

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Three drown near Barkaje dam in Dakshina Kannada

MANGALURU, 27 NOV

Three youngsters drowned in the Barkaje dam area in Dakshina Kannada district on Wednesday, police said. After attending a church event, they went for a swim near the dam in Belthangady taluk and they are said to be nursing students. The victims are Lawrence, 20, from Edapadavu in Moodbidri taluk; Suraj, 19, from Parenki in Belthangady; and Jaison, 19, from Wagga in Bantwal taluk. The trio had arrived at a friend's house in Moodukodi village to attend the church festival. After lunch, they went to swim in the river close to Barkaje dam, but they were caught in the current and drowned. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Bomb hoax at B'luru bank sends cops into a tizzy

BENGALURU, 27 NOV

The police sprang into action on Wednesday afternoon after HSBC Bank received an email claiming a bomb had been planted at its MG Road branch in the city, police sources said. Officers from the Halasuru police station immediately rushed to the location and conducted a thorough search of the premises. Later, the threat was confirmed to be a hoax. The police have registered a case against the unknown sender of the email and initiated an investigation. *—PTI*

Internet ban extended for 2 days in Manipur

IMPHAL, 27 NOV

Manipur on Wednesday extended the suspension of mobile internet services for two more days in nine districts until 29 November, an order by the home department said. "The state government, after reviewing the prevailing law and order situation, has decided to continue the suspension of mobile internet and mobile data services, including VSATs and VPN, in the territorial jurisdiction of Imphal West, Imphal East, Kakching, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Pherzawl, and Jiribam of Manipur for another two days, in public interest," the order said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Petition claims temple beneath Ajmer Dargah

JAIPUR, 27 NOV

A local court in Ajmer on Wednesday directed that notice be issued to three parties in a civil suit which claims that there is a Shiva temple in the dargah of sufi saint Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, the plaintiff's advocate said. Advocate Yogesh Siroja told reporters in Ajmer that the suit was heard in the court of Civil Judge Manmohan Chandel. The suit, claiming that there is a Shiva temple in the dargah, was filed in September seeking directions to start the worship in the temple again. He said notices have been issued to Ajmer Dargah Committee, Ministry of Minority Affairs and Archaeological Survey of India office in New Delhi. *—PTI*

US has not charged Adani, Sagar for bribery: Group

Group says just 3 executives face wire and fraud charges

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Embattled billionaire Gautam Adani and his aides have not been charged under the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), an Adani Group entity said on Wednesday.

They added that they faced three other charges, including securities and wire fraud that are punishable with monetary fines.

The US Department of Justice's (US DOJ) indictment filed in a New York Court last week does not mention Gautam Adani, Founder Chairman of the ports-to-energy conglomerate, his nephew Sagar, or Vneet Jaain in any count related to conspiracy to violate the FCPA, Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL), said in a stock exchange filing.

AGEL is at the heart of the allegation of USD 265-million bribes being paid to Indian officials to secure solar power sale contracts that could benefit bring in USD 2 billion of profits over 20-year period to the firm.

Gautam and Sagar also face a civil complaint over violation of sections of the Securities Act, and aiding and abetting Adani Green to violate the Act, the company said. The FCPA makes it a crime for a company or person with US links to pay or offer something of value to another government's officials for favourable treatment. Former attorney general and senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi backed Adani Group's claims saying in his assessment there are five charges or counts and Adani and his aides have not been charged under Count 1 or 5 which deal with allegations of 'conspiracy to violate the FCPA' and 'conspiracy to obstruct justice' respectively. *—PTI*

Parl was adjourned as Oppn demanded a debate on the issue saying PM Narendra Modi is backing Adani. A file photo shows the duo in a private plane

Parl adjourned amid Oppn's Adani protest

Parliament failed to transact any significant business on the second day of the winter session as protests by opposition members who were pressing for discussions on allegations of irregularities against the Adani Group, Sambhal violence and other issues rocked both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 7

'AGAINST CONSTITUTION'

Religious conversion for quota is fraud: SC

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

The Supreme Court said religious conversions undertaken solely to avail reservation benefits without genuine belief amounted to a "fraud on the Constitution".

Justices Pankaj Mithal and R Mahadevan passed the verdict on 26 November in a case filed by C Selvarani and upheld a Madras High Court decision of 24 January denying a Scheduled Caste certificate to a woman who converted to Christianity but later claimed to be a Hindu to secure employment benefits.

Justice Mahadevan underscored that one converted to a different religion, when they were inspired by its principles, tenets and spiritual thoughts.

"However, if the purpose of conversion is largely to derive the benefits of reservation, it will only defeat the social ethos of the policy of reservation," he noted.

The evidence presented before the bench claimed that the appellant professed Christianity and practiced the faith by attending church regularly. She cannot identify herself as a Hindu after baptism, the bench said.

Selvarani, born to a Hindu father and a Christian mother, was baptised shortly after birth but later claimed to be a Hindu and sought an SC certificate to apply for an upper division clerk position in Puducherry in 2015. While her father belonged to the Valluvan caste, categorised under scheduled castes, he had converted to Christianity. The bench noted individuals converting to Christianity lose their caste identity and must provide compelling evidence of reconversion and acceptance by their original caste to claim SC benefits. *—PTI*

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Shinde clears deck for BJP CM

MUMBAI, 27 NOV

Notwithstanding the posturing by his Shiv Sena cadre that he continue as Maharashtra Chief Minister, Eknath Shinde on Wednesday made it clear that he has assured Prime Minsiter Modi of abiding by whatever decision BJP takes on naming his successor.

Addressing a press conference at his house in Thane, Shinde said he will "fully support" BJP leadership's decision to name the next chief minister , and won't be a hurdle in the process.

Eknath Shinde PHOTO: PTI

Shinde rubbished reports that he was disappointed for not getting a second term despite the ruling Mahayuti alliance winning a thumping victory under his leadership. "Nobody is annoyed. We have worked as Mahayuti," he said. "There is a meeting in Delhi tomorrow with Amit Shah and all related decisions will be taken there," Shinde said, when asked about who the deputy chief ministers will be in the new cabinet. Sources told PTI that Shinde may have already indicated his willingness to be one of the two deputy chief minister in the new cabinet. The modalities of forming the next government will be finalised in the meeting at Delhi on Thursday, Shinde said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

HOMECOMING AFTER CEASEFIRE

Long-displaced residents of Lebanon returned to their homes amid celebrations hours after a ceasefire between Israel and the Hezbollah took effect on Wednesday. Israel said it will renew the attack if Hezbollah breaks the pact. India welcomed the ceasefire and said that it hoped the deal will lead to peace PHOTO: EPA *>>>More on Pages 3, 5 & 6*

PARL TALKING POINTS

Stricter laws for vulgar OTT, online post soon?

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday called for stricter laws to curb vulgar content on social media, saying absence of editorial oversight has led to "uncontrolled expression" on such platforms.

Talking in Lok Sabha, he said there was a vast difference in the cultural sensitivities in India and the countries where these social media platforms were created.

Vaishnaw said the Parliamentary Standing Committee should take up the issue.

He said earlier there were editorial checks on publishing content, but the same has diminished since the advent of social media and OTT platforms. Vaishnaw said the Government has notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021) that provide for a Code of Ethics for publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms). The rules require the publishers not to transmit any content which is prohibited by law for the time being in force and to undertake age-based classification of content into five categories, based on general guidelines provided in the Schedule to the Rules, he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Airlines received 994 bomb threats this year: Govt

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Airlines received 994 hoax bomb threats this year till 13 November and robust protocols are in place to handle such threats, the government has said.

To deal with the menace of hoax calls in a comprehensive manner, the Civil Aviation Ministry plans to amend the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Civil Aviation Act, 1982, and Aircraft (Security) Rules, 2023. A total of 1,143 hoax bomb threat messages/calls were received from August 2022 till 13 November, 2024, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Muralidhar Mohol informed Rajya Sabha.

During the period from August 2022 to December 2022, there were 27 threats and the number rose to 122 last year. *—PTI*

B'desh labels ISKCON fundamentalist

DHAKA, 27 NOV

The Bangladeshi government has labeled the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) a "religious fundamentalist organisation" following a writ petition in the High Court demanding its ban. This comes amid nationwide protests over the arrest of Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari on Monday, who led rallies advocating Hindu rights in Chattogram and Rangpur. Das, previously affiliated with ISKCON, was detained on sedition charges disrespecting the national flag during a rally. His arrest sparked protests, leaving at least 37 injured. *—Agencies*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 6

Anti-doping ban will be lifted if I join BJP: Bajrang

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Suspended for four years due to his "refusal" to provide sample for dope test, Olympic medallist Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia on Wednesday said it was a vindictive move by the government which would quash the ban if he joins the BJP.

National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) said Bajrang violated the rules by refusing to give sample during selection trials for the national team on 10 March.

"I have not refused to give sample to NADA. When they visited my home to conduct the dope test, they came with an expiry kit (in December, 2023)," Barjrang told reporters.

Bajrang added in his defence, "I gave my urine sample but then my team checked the kit and found out that it was expired. So we made a video of the kit and we mailed NADA, called them to inform about the mistake. But they did not accept their mistake."

The wrestler alleged that the government is looking to get back at them for their involvement in the long-drawn sit-in protest against former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, a BJP politician. *—PTI*

Bajrang Punia PHOTO: FB

DISPUTE OVER BOREWELL

MP sarpanch beats Dalit man to death

SHIVPURI, 27 NOV

A 30-year-old Dalit man was allegedly beaten to death by the sarpanch and seven others over a borewell and land dispute in a village in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri, an official said on Wednesday.

The attack, allegedly "orchestrated by the village sarpanch and his family, stemmed from a long-standing dispute over a land pathway and borewell", police said.

Narad Jatav was fatally attacked on Tuesday after he and his maternal uncle objected to a road created through their land to a hotel belonging to the sarpanch, Padam Dhakad, in Indergarh village, the official said.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has directed the release of Rs 4 lakh aid to Jatav's family.

A purported video of the incident went viral on Wednesday, which shows multiple people repeatedly assaulting Jatav, who pleads with them to stop SCREENGRAB FROM: X/@JITUPATWARI

Yadav also informed that eight people have been detained in the Dalit man's murder. Yadav has directed officials to take strict action against the culprits, he said.

He said that elements spreading unrest in the state will face tough action.

There is no place for cruelty and anarchy in Madhya Pradesh, he said.

Earlier, an official had said that following the dispute over the road, Jatav allegedly removed the water supply line from a common borewell to the sarpanch Dhakad's hotel. Dhakad and his family then beat him with sticks and killed him, Kotwali police station in-charge Kripal Singh Rathore said. Jatav's family protested in the medical college where his body was taken for autopsy, demanding the registration of a first information report (FIR) against the accused, he said.

Later, police pacified them and registered a murder case against the sarpanch and his other family members, including his wife and sons, Rathore said. *—PTI*

Couple run over by KSRTC bus after falling from bike

CHINTAMANI, 27 NOV

A couple died on the spot when they fell from their bike and were run over by a KSRTC bus in Chintamani town on Wednesday. The deceased are Venkatesh, 40, and his wife Saraswathi, 34, residents of Gommasandra village in Chintamani taluk. The deceased were on their way to Narayanahalli village in Kaiwara Hobli to attend a religious function when the incident took place. The driver of the KSRTC bus, which was travelling from Sidlagatta to Chintamani, tried to save the couple but failed because the couple fell down too close in front of the bus. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: X

3 women held for kidnapping newborn

KALABURAGI, 27 NOV

Three women have been arrested in connection with the kidnapping of a newborn from the Gulbarga Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS), police said on Wednesday. The suspects are residents of Shah Jilani Dargah near MSK Mill in Kalaburagi. Kalaburagi Police Commissioner Sharanappa S D said that the newborn was kidnapped on 25 November, just 12 hours after birth, by two women who had disguised themselves as hospital staff. "This case was treated with utmost seriousness. Special teams were formed, and they successfully apprehended the three women and safely rescued the child," the police commissioner said. The investigation revealed that the accused had made arrangements to sell the male child to a childless family for Rs 50,000, of which they had received an advance of Rs 25,000. *—Salar News*

3-yr-old elephant electrocuted in Gundlupet

MYSURU, 27 NOV

A three-year-old male elephant was electrocuted after touching a live electric fence installed by a farmer around his field at Mangala village in Gundlupet taluk on Tuesday. The village borders the Kundakere division forest on the fringes of Bandipur tiger reserve. Deputy Conservator of Forest S Prabhakaran visited the spot. The forest department has filed a complaint with the police against the owner of the land Sharif Khan and another farmer who had leased it. Farmers living in villages near the forest urged the department to prevent wild animals from straying on to their lands and destroying crops. They were forced to install electric fences to protect their crops, they said. *—Salar News*

City to host clown festival from 29 Nov to 1 Dec

BENGALURU, 27 NOV

The 10th edition of The International Clown Festival, promising 120 minutes of non-stop laughter, comedy, juggling, and music, will feature 25 clowns from 11 countries, including India, the USA and Canada. The festival will be held at Dr BR Ambedkar Bhawan in Vasanth Nagar here from 29 November to 1 December, with three shows daily at 11am, 3pm, and 7pm. "We hope that our characters can bring as much happiness and delight to your lives as they do to ours," said Martin D'Souza, former vice-president of the World Clown Association, who has curated and produced the festival. Mumbai-based D'Souza, known for his clown persona 'Flubber', is an award-winning international clown. This year, D'Souza introduced a new initiative at the festival called 'Points for Good'. It allows loyalty programme members to donate points to causes. *—Salar News*

Cabinet rejig buzz grows as CM, DKS head to Delhi

Satish Jarkiholi says there are talks on such exercise

BENGALURU, 27 NOV

Speculations regarding the reshuffle of the Siddaramaiah-led Cabinet in the days ahead gained momentum in Karnataka with PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi on Wednesday stating that there were talks about such an exercise but he was not aware when it would take place.

The Delhi visit of CM Siddaramaiah and his deputy Shivakumar is also adding to the speculations. While the CM is slated to leave for the national capital on Thursday evening, Shivakumar is already there.

Jarkiholi's statement came a day after Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who is also the State Congress president, indicated the possibility of a Cabinet reshuffle, noting that a few ministers have been given a "message" about their term.

"Don't know when it will be done, but there is news that some people will be changed, to change some portfolios.

While CM Siddaramaiah is slated to leave for Delhi on Thursday evening, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar is already there for reshuffle talks **PHOTO: PTI**

Such discussions are on...I have not asked for anything. It is left for the high command..." Jarkiholi said.

Speculations are rife about Cabinet reshuffle and evaluation of the performance of the ministers, ever since the Lok Sabha poll results. There has also been a demand from a section of MLAs, who are ministerial aspirants, to be inducted into the Cabinet. Some have openly expressed their wish to become ministers.

Home Minister G Parameshwara said, "Cabinet reshuffle is the Chief Minister's prerogative. He will consult the Pradesh Congress Committee president and go about it." About Shivakumar's statement, he said, "He (Shivakumar) is the party State president. I don't know what messages he has sent (to some ministers)."

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said in Shivamogga, "It is good if the reshuffle is done after two years as others should also get the opportunity. He might have said it with that intention. It is not that only we should continue (as ministers) and others shouldn't come (to the post), so everyone should be prepared..."

Meanwhile, Jarkiholi, who is also seen as the contender for the KPCC President post, said it was not an easy job. "Everyone's cooperation is required to handle the post, but there is no discussion about changing the president post for now....it is not an easy job. It is like standing on thorns, it is a difficult job," he said. *—PTI*

CIVIL SUIT FILED

Woman claims MUDA land sold to CM's wife

Siddaramaiah and his wife Parvathi BM **PHOTOS: ANI/X**

MYSURU, 27 NOV

A civil suit filed by a woman has introduced a new twist in the alleged MUDA land allotment scam in which Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his wife Parvathi BM are implicated.

Mysore Urban Development Authority had allotted 14 plots of land to Parvathi BM in the upmarket area in lieu of the land it acquired from her in Kesare Village in Mysuru. The Kesare land was reportedly gifted to Parvathi by her brother Mallikarjuna Swamy, who in turn purchased it from one Devaraju.

It is accused in a case registered by Lokayukta police that the plots provided to her are of higher value than that was acquired from her.

The petition was filed in front of the Seventh Additional Senior Civil Judge and Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) in Mysuru by Jamuna, niece of the fourth accused in the MUDA scam and land owner Deveraju. Jamuna is the daughter of Devaraju's elder brother Mylaraiah.

Jamuna in the civil suit filed by her said that she was denied share in the land in survey number 64 measuring three acres 16 guntas in Kesare village in Mysuru. This case means that Jamuna claims rights over the land which MUDA acquired from Parvathi.

Jamuna said she filed the suit four months ago after she learnt that she too had a share in the land, which originally belonged to her father Mylaraiah. Jamuna added that she came to know about her share after the controversy broke out.

Jamuna has filed a case against 10 people including the Chief Minister and his wife. She has accused Devaraju of illegally selling their land after collecting their signatures under the pretext of doing khata.

—Salar News with Agencies

DyCM seeks faster green nod for Kalasa-Banduri project

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday called on Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav and urged him to expedite environment clearances for the Kalasa-Banduri irrigation project, highlighting ongoing challenges in inter-state water infrastructure development.

In a representation made to the Union Minister, Shivakumar, who is also in charge of the Irrigation Ministry, argued that the project remains critical for the State's water needs.

The Kalasa-Banduri Project is a water diversion project that aims to supply drinking water to the arid districts of Karnataka.

Shivakumar said that the National Board for Wildlife previously rejected Karnataka's proposal, citing legal disputes among Karnataka, Goa, and Maharashtra over the Mahadayi Water Dispute Tribunal's award, which is pending before the Supreme Court.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar calls on Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav in New Delhi on Wednesday **PHOTO: X**

Karnataka has significantly reduced its forest land requirements for the project, trimming the Kalasa project's footprint from 258 hectares to 26.92 hectares, and the Banduri project from 243 hectares to 28.44 hectares.

The government contends that the proposed land is part of a tiger corridor and could potentially provide water resources for wildlife in the area, he noted. Shivakumar also met Union Food Minister Pralhad Joshi to discuss the urgency of securing clearances for multiple water projects, including the Mekedatu Irrigation Project, and resolving ongoing water distribution disputes. *—Salar News*

Man gets death for killing wife, kids & mother

MYSURU, 27 NOV

Fifth Additional Sessions Court of Mysuru has handed death sentence to a man for killing his pregnant wife, two children and mother.

The convict, Manikanta Swamy, is a resident of Chamegowdanahundi in Saraguru taluk and a differently abled person.

Saragur Police had filed a chargesheet in the court against Swamy for murdering his nine months pregnant wife Gange, suspecting her fidelity, his children four-year-old son Samrat and one-and-a-half year-old Rohith and his mother Kempajamma on 28 April, 2021. Swamy married Gange in 2014. Swamy used a metal walking stick to kill his family members while they were sleeping.

Apart from awarding the death sentence, Justice Gururaj Somakkalavar on Tuesday also ordered Swamy to pay a penalty of Rs 5,000 to the court. The judge also ordered District Legal Services Authority to pay compensation to Gange's parents. *—PTI*

India-Switzerland ties key for biotech: Min

BENGALURU, 27 NOV

Minister for Information Technology and Biotechnology Priyank Kharge on Wednesday highlighted the critical role of collaboration between India and Switzerland in advancing biotech research and addressing global challenges.

Speaking at an event hosted by Swissnex, Bengaluru, where femtech innovation company Anabio Technologies announced taking over Zurich-based microbial research and diagnostics company Microbe Investigations Switzerland (MIS), Kharge hailed the acquisition as evidence of Karnataka's thriving biotech ecosystem.

"With initiatives like Elevate, Unnati and world-class infrastructure such as the Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre, Karnataka is proud to provide a conducive environment for innovation. We are committed to supporting companies like Anabio Technologies, who are taking India's biotech prowess to the global stage."

Several key leaders from both India and Switzerland, including Swissnex CEO and Consul General Jonas Brunschwig, Anabio Technologies CEO Mithun Shah, MIS Board Chairman Prof Dr Hendrik Tevaearai, were present at the event.

The acquisition is a milestone in strengthening the Indo-Swiss partnership in biotechnology, fostering greater collaboration between India and Switzerland in microbial diagnostics, microbiome research and sustainable innovation. *—ANI*

Seer apologises over comments on denying voting power to Muslims

BENGALURU, 27 NOV

Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamastana Math seer Kumara Chandrashekaranath Swamiji on Wednesday expressed regret over his statement on denying voting power to the Muslim community, calling it a "slip of tongue".

He said Muslims are also citizens of this country, and they too have voting rights like others.

"My opinion regarding my yesterday's (Tuesday's) statement is, Muslims are also citizens of this country, they too have voting rights like others. I express my wholehearted regret if Muslim brothers are upset by my slip of tongue in the statement yesterday (Tuesday). I request not to develop this issue and to end it here," the seer said.

Kumara Chandrashekaranath **PHOTO: PTI**

Urging everyone to unite to protect farmers and their land, the Swamiji, in the wake of Waqf properties row, on Tuesday said that a law should be brought in where Muslim community don't have the voting power.

"Everyone should think and see to it that the Waqf board itself is not there....as politicians do things for the sake of votes, a law should be brought in where Muslims community don't have the voting power....it should be certainly done. In Pakistan, they have done it, others don't have power to vote there. Similarly, even in India, if we ensure that they (Muslims) don't have a right to vote, then they will stay to themselves, and everyone can remain peacefully," he he had said.

He said someone taking away someone else's land is not "Dharma". *—PTI*

WINTER IS HERE

Winter has arrived early in Bengaluru, wrapping the City in a chilly embrace! With temperatures dipping to 16°C, citizens are bundling up, and blanket sellers are making brisk business. Brace yourselves — this winter promises to be harsher, warns the IMD **PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD**

RISING SEA LEVELS

'50% of Dakshina Kannada's coast eroded'

MANGALURU, 27 NOV

A total of 48.4 per cent of the 33 kilometres of Dakshina Kannada's shoreline has been eroded, making it the most affected among Karnataka's three coastal districts, said Union Minister of State KV Singh, citing a study by the National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR).

He was replying to a question raised by Dakshina Kannada MP Brijesh Chowta.

The NCCR study revealed that 17.74km (48.4 per cent) of Dakshina Kannada's 36.66km coastline experienced erosion between 1990 and 2018. In comparison, Udupi district recorded 34.7 per cent erosion (34.96 km of 100.71km), while Uttara Kannada had the lowest at 12.3 per cent (21.64km of 175.65km).

NCCR study revealed that 17.74km (48.4%) of Dakshina Kannada's 36.66km coastline experienced erosion between 1990 and 2018 **PHOTO: X**

Singh, MoS, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, highlighted findings from the study, noting that 33.6 per cent of India's coastline is affected by erosion, 26.9 per cent is experiencing accretion (growth), and 39.6 per cent remains stable. He attributed the widespread coastal erosion primarily to rising sea levels along the Indian coastline.

Singh informed the Parliament that the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information and Services (INCOIS) has prepared Multi-Hazard Vulnerability Maps (MHVM) at a 1:25,000 scale for the mainland. These maps incorporate data on extreme water levels, shoreline changes, sea level rise, and high-resolution terrain mapping to identify areas vulnerable to disasters like tsunamis and storm surges, he added.

Speaking to PTI over the phone, Brijesh Chowta said he plans to "tour the affected areas in Dakshina Kannada district after the Parliament session and report back to the minister." *—PTI*

4 cops get 7-yr jail in custodial death case

BENGALURU, 27 NOV

Four police personnel were sentenced to seven years imprisonment and were slapped a fine of Rs 55,000 each, in connection with a case of custodial death.

A man called Mahendra Rathod was brought to Jeevan Beema Nagar police station in Bengaluru, on 19 March, 2016 in connection with a theft case, and he died in the police station, it was alleged.

The Criminal Investigation Department probe was ordered into the death and the investigation found that four police personnel present in the station beaten the victim and due to which he died.

The CID later filed a charge sheet against them in the court on 18 July, 2019.

Additional District and Sessions Court that heard the case convicted four police personnel on Tuesday, a release from the CID said.

Head constable Ejaz Khan, constables Keshava Murthy, Mohan Ram and Siddappa Bommanahalli were sentenced to seven years imprisonment and Rs 30,000 fine under section 304 of the IPC and five years imprisonment and Rs 25,000 fine under section 330 of the IPC.

—Salar News

India welcomes Israel-Lebanon ceasefire

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

India on Wednesday welcomed the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon and said it hoped that these developments will lead to "peace and stability" in the wider region. The ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon-based Hezbollah began early Wednesday morning, according to reports. The Ministry of External Affair said in a statement -"We welcome the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon that has been announced. We have always called for de-escalation, restraint and return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy. We hope these developments will lead to peace and stability in the wider region." *—PTI*

Mizoram village condemn decision on VCs tenure

AIZAWL, 27 NOV

All Mizoram Village Council Association (AMVCA) has termed the state government's decision to curtail the current term of village councils (VC) as "undemocratic" and said they would challenge the order in high court. A notification issued by the local administration department last week said that the current term of the village councils in Mizoram barring those within three autonomous district council areas in the southern part of the state, has been curtailed by six months and shall end on 19 February next year. AMVCA president K Lalngaizuala said that members of village councils during a conference held in Aizawl on Tuesday unanimously adopted a resolution to approach the Gauhati High Court. Earlier, Mizoram Local Administration (LAD) minister C Lalsawivunga had claimed that the tenure of the existing VCs was reduced to ensure effective management of state funds. *—PTI*

Soren set to take oath Jharkhand's 14th CM today

RANCHI/NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Hemant Soren is set to take oath as the 14th chief minister of Jharkhand in a grand ceremony at Morabadi Ground on Thursday, with several prominent political leaders and dignitaries, including key members of the INDIA bloc, expected to be in attendance.
Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar will administer the oath of office and secrecy to Soren at 4pm. Meawhile, Congress leaders from Wayanad, Kerala handed over the election certificate of the parliamentary byelection to party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the presence of Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday. Sources said Priyanka is likely to take oath in Lok Sabha on Thursday *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

TMC issues showcause notice to MLA Kabir

KOLKATA, 26 NOV

The Trinamool Congress on Wednesday issued a show cause notice to party MLA Humayun Kabir for his recent comments to media about 'a coterie within the party' trying to influence every decision taken by Mamata Banerjee. A TMC leader said Kabir has been asked to explain the reason behind making such comments in public after the national executive meeting where it was stated that none can speak out of turn in public about decisions taken by the top leadership and break party discipline. However, Kabir said he did not do anything wrong and only reiterated the position about Abhishek Banerjee occupying the number two berth in TMC and argued that he should be given more space to tone up the organisation. *—PTI*

Parl adjourned 2nd time as Oppn protests against Adani

Opposition also raised UP's Sambhal and issues of minorities

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Parliament failed to transact any significant business on the second day of the winter session as protests by opposition members who were pressing for discussions on allegations of irregularities against the Adani Group, Sambhal violence and other issues rocked both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

The two Houses were adjourned once in the morning and later for the day amid continuing uproar by opposition members.

Soon after the Lok Sabha met, Speaker Om Birla took up the Question Hour, but adjourned the House proceedings following sloganeering by the opposition members.

They wanted to discuss the allegations of irregularities against the Adani group and the recent violence in Sambhal during a court-ordered survey of a mosque. They trooped into the Well of the House raising slogans as soon as the House met again at 12 noon.

BJP member Dilip Saikia, who was in the chair, adjourned the proceedings for the day after official papers were laid on the table.

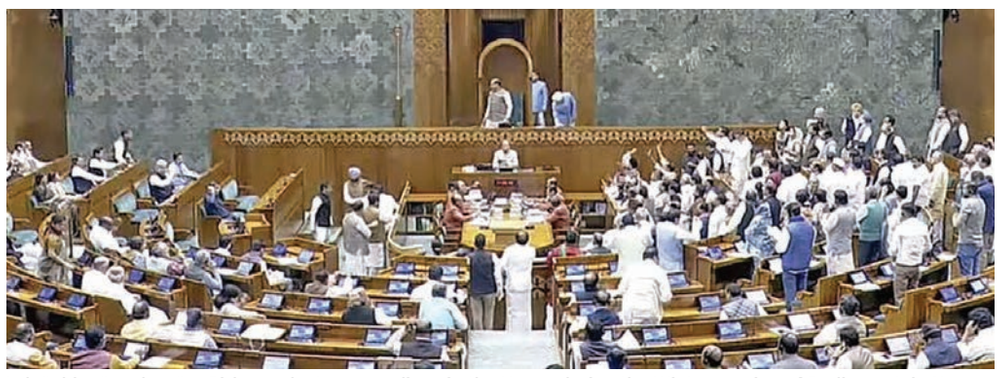
In Rajya Sabha, the trouble started after Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar rejected 18 notices under a rule of the House to suspend scheduled business to take up issues including the demand for a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe into the Adani issue.

The proceedings were briefly adjourned due to opposition protests, and when the House re-assembled at 11.30 am, there were identical scenes. This prompted Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar to adjourn the proceedings for the day, saying the "House is not in order".

The notices related to the demand for the "constitution of a JPC to investigate the alleged misconduct, including corruption, bribery, financial irregularities of the Adani Group in connivance with other authorities", violence in Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh and "rising" incidents of crime in the national capital.

Only Congress members demanded a discussion under Rule 267 after the suspension of the house business, on setting up a joint parliamentary committee to probe allegations against the Adani group, while other opposition parties gave similar notices on different issues.

The Congress members who had given the notices were G C Chandrashekhar, Randeep Singh Surjewala, Syed Naseer Hussain, Neeraj Dangi, Renuka Chowdhury, Rajeev Shukla, Pramod Tiwari, Akhilesh Prasad Singh and Jebi Mather Hisham. *—PTI*



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla conducts proceedings in the House during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Why Adani was not in jail when hundreds of people were arrested in the country on tiny charges. Modani ecosystem" was attempting to dilute the seriousness of the bribery allegations

-Rahul Gandhi, LoP in Lok Sabha

Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari (C) protests in Kolkata **PHOTO: PTI**

All parties voice concern in B'desh row

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Congress on Wednesday expressed deep concern over the "atmosphere of insecurity" being faced by religious minorities in Bangladesh and the arrest of Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das.

In a statement, Chairman of the party's Media and Publicity Department Pawan Khera said, "The Indian National Congress expects the government of India to prevail upon the Bangladesh government to take necessary steps and ensure security of life and property of minorities in the country". A lawyer was killed on Tuesday during clashes between security personnel and followers of Das, who was denied bail and sent to jail by a court in the port city of Chattogram in Bangladesh in a sedition case.

Das, the spokesperson for Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote, was arrested in Dhaka a day earlier. India noted with "deep concern" the arrest and denial of bail to the Hindu leader, and urged authorities in the neighbouring country to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all other minority groups.

Bangladesh reacted sharply to the Ministry of External Affairs statement, saying it was unfounded and stood contrary to the spirit of friendship between the two countries. Senior West Bengal BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari on Wednesday said that Indian authorities should immediately stop issuing visas to Bangladeshis, unless the caretaker government in the neighbouring country releases prominent Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari.

Also, TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee also condemned the attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh. "What has happened cannot be supported, it is condemnable. It is an international issue, as a party, our stand is clear, that we support the government of India's stand on this issue," Banerjee said. *—PTI*

Assam plans return of 1,000 displaced Kuki-Zos

IMPHAL, 27 NOV

The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) in Assam has announced plans to facilitate the return of around 1,000 Kuki-Zo people who took refuge in the Singhason Hills following last year's violence in Manipur. KAAC Chief Executive Member Tuliram Ronghang stated that discussions with stakeholders, including Kuki representatives, will be held to ensure an amicable resolution.

"We will not forcefully evict them but will work towards their return through dialogue with social and political organizations," Ronghang said.

He emphasised that land rights in Karbi Anglong would only be granted to longstanding residents and not to migrants from outside the district, including those from Manipur.

The Army intensified its search for Laishram Kamalbabu Singh, a works supervisor for the Military Engineering Services, who went missing from Imphal West's Khukrul on 25 November.

The Army has deployed drones and aerial surveillance while combing the military station and nearby villages. Civil society organisations have also been engaged in the search. But neither Singh nor his two-wheeler has been found. *—PTI*

Manipur woman held in connection with attack on houses of lawmakers

IMPHAL, 27 NOV

A 46-year-old woman was arrested for her alleged involvement in the vandalism at residences of MLAs and ministers in Imphal Valley on November 16, police said on Wednesday.

Mobs set fire to the residences of three BJP legislators, one of whom is a senior minister, and a Congress MLA in various districts of Imphal Valley following the violence in Jiribam.

The violence had escalated after three women and three children belonging to the Meitei community had gone missing from a relief camp in Jiribam after a gunfight between security forces and suspected Kuki-Zo militants resulted in the deaths of 10 insurgents on November 11. Later, the bodies of these six persons were found. Over 30 people have been arrested so far in connection with the mob attacks. Meanwhile, an active cadre of the proscribed Kangleipak Communist Party (People's War Group) was arrested on charges of extortion in the Nambol area in the Bishnipur district. *—PTI*

POST ELECTION HEAT

MVA seeks VVPAT units verification

MUMBAI, 27 NOV

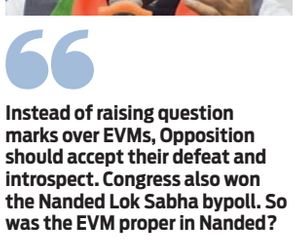
The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidates who faced defeat in the recent Maharashtra assembly polls have decided to seek verification of the EVM-Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs) units in their segments, a leader of the opposition alliance said.

Many losing candidates of the opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) pointed fingers at the functioning of the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) during their interaction with party head Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday as he took stock of the lacklustre performance of his party at a meeting held at his residence in Mumbai.

Congress leader Arif Naseem Khan, who lost the election from Chandivali assembly constituency in Mumbai, said Thackeray told him that party workers have complained to him about the possibility of EVMs having been tampered.

"We are getting complaints from different parts of the state expressing doubts over the results. In a democracy, complaints need to be verified and many of us, including myself, (who faced defeat) are in the process of applying for the verification," Khan said.

As per the Supreme Court's judgement on 26 April this year, the burnt memory/microcontroller in 5 per cent of the EVMs – the control unit, ballot unit and the VVPAT – per assembly constituency shall be checked and verified by a team of engineers from manufacturers of the EVMs, after the announcement of results, for any tampering or modification, he said. A written request has to be made by candidates who are in the second or third position behind the highest polled candidate. Such a request has to be made within seven days of declaration of the result, Khan said. *—PTI*



Instead of raising question marks over EVMs, Opposition should accept their defeat and introspect. Congress also won the Nanded Lok Sabha bypoll. So was the EVM proper in Nanded?

-Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Maharashtra BJP Chief

Congress said Sena's Uddhav Thackeray told him that people complained about the possibility of EVMs being tampered **PHOTO: PTI**

2 DyCMs formula likely to continue

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Maharashtra NDA leaders are likely to meet the top BJP brass here on Thursday, sources said, indicating that the formula of one chief minister and two deputy CMs representing the three major 'Mahayuti' constituents will be followed in the new government in the state.

While the BJP is tipped to get the chief ministerial post, its two allies -- Shiv Sena Nationalist Congress Party -- are expected to be given the post of two deputies.

Shiv Sena leader and outgoing Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had earlier in the day all but cleared the decks for a BJP leader to succeed him, with outgoing Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis seen as the clear favourite for the top job.

Shinde said he will "fully support" the BJP leadership's choice for the next CM, adding that he won't be a hurdle in the process.

"I called PM Modi yesterday and also Amit Shah and told them to decide (on who will be the CM post), and assured them that I will abide by whatever decision they take," Shinde told reporters at his residence in Thane.

Shinde may swap his position with Fadnavis while Pawar will continue as one of the two deputy chief ministers, sources said.

However, the details of the new government are likely to be given a concrete shape in the meeting of the state's ruling alliance leaders with the BJP's national leadership. *—PTI*

$100B TARGET BY 2030

India-Russia trade hits $66B in 2024, says Russian envoy

KOLKATA, 27 NOV

A Russian diplomat on Wednesday said the bilateral trade between the two countries has reached a record USD 66B in 2024, marking a fivefold increase over the past five years, with a nine per cent rise in the first eight months of this year.

The envoy said Russia and India were on track to achieve the ambitious USD 100B trade target by 2030, bolstered by expanding collaborations and diversified trade opportunities.

"The recent dialogues between leaders of both countries on the possibilities of diversifying the trade basket and increasing the volume of investments in multiple sectors make the target of USD 100B by 2030 an achievable one," said Russian Consul General in Kolkata Maxim V Kozlov at an interactive session with members of the Bharat Chamber of Commerce (BCC).

"India and Russia are more than strategic partners; we are all-weather friends. Our bond is built on mutual trust and shared interests, making the growth of our economic ties both natural and enduring," Kozlov added.

Key sectors identified for enhanced cooperation include railways, pharmaceuticals, information technology, aviation, and cybersecurity.

Officials also highlighted emerging opportunities for Indian businesses in Russia, particularly after the withdrawal of Western brands following the Ukraine conflict.

The BCC said Kozlov also emphasised the need to deepen collaboration in critical areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, urban development and critical metals like lithium, cobalt and nickel, which are essential for next-generation industries. "The goal is to move beyond raw material trade and emerge as global leaders in technology-driven sectors," he added. *—PTI*

Russian Consul General in Kolkata Maxim V Kozlov **PHOTO: X**

- They KEey sectors identified for enhanced cooperation include railways, pharmaceuticals, information technology, aviation, and cybersecurity

Waqf Bill panel Chairman Jagdambika Pal with AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Waqf Parl panel to seek tenure extension

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

The parliamentary committee scrutinising the Waqf (Amendment) Bill on Wednesday unanimously decided to seek an extension in its tenure till the last day of the next Budget Session after its meeting was marked by angry protests by the opposition members over Chairperson Jagdambika Pal's stand that its draft report was ready to be adopted.

The meeting began on a stormy note as the opposition members staged a walkout and slammed Pal, who is the joint parliamentary committee chairperson.

Temperatures cooled down after Pal and the BJP members of the committee reached out to them, indicating their willingness to press for an extension of the committee's deadline of November 29 to submit its report to Lok Sabha.

Pal, who is a BJP MP, said the committee was unanimous in its view as it has to listen to some other stakeholders, including six states, where there are disputes between the waqf and the state governments. Opposition members in the Bihar assembly stormed the well of the House on Wednesday seeking withdrawal of the Waqf Amendment Bill by the Centre and demanding that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar clear his stand on the contentious issue. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Mizoram to fire non-performing govt workers

AIZAWL, 27 NOV

The Mizoram government headed by Chief Minister Lalduhoma has decided to remove non-performing employees from service. During a meeting held in Aizawl to review some initiatives of the education department on Tuesday, Lalduhoma said committees were being formed in departments to review the services of employees under the state government. He said that initiatives were taken to ensure a qualified and efficient workforce. "We feel that it is better we relieve all unqualified employees, who are no longer worth to be employed, from their services as per norms. We are committed to having efficient employees who maintain good quality of services," Lalduhoma said. The CM said his government was taking steps to ensure proper and effective execution of all projects. *—PTI*

Cyclone Fengal: 2,000 acres of crops ruined in TN rains

Farmers allege canals not desilted; schools shut as cyclone nears

CHENNAI, 27 NOV

Rains continued on Wednesday in Tamil Nadu's Cauvery delta areas affecting standing paddy crops, and Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami urged the state government to provide appropriate relief to farmers.

Crops were submerged partially and completely in Tiruvarur, Thiruthuraipoondi, Muthupettai, Mayiladuthurai, and Vedaranyam, and according to farmers' rough estimates, crops on at least 2,000 acres were affected.

Also, huge acreage of salt pans in the districts of Nagapattinam (Vedaranyam) and Villupuram (Marakkanman) came under water.

Farmers leader PR Pandian alleged that canals and rivers were not properly desilted in the delta areas.

Rain-related incidents, including the collapse of an old house at Tarangampadi and the wall of a Dharga's tank at Jambuvanodai in Tiruvarur district have been reported. Trees were uprooted and some fell on nearby electricity poles causing power failure and many localities were inundated.

Villagers show the damaged crops after rainwater inundated their field, in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

According to an IMD's rainfall update, very heavy rainfall was recorded in several areas, including Nagapattinam (19 cm) and Chennai (13 cm), from 8.30 am on November 26 until 8.30 am the following day.

Also, there was widespread heavy rainfall, including in the delta areas, and the rest of the state experienced mild to moderate showers. NDRF and state teams have been deployed in delta districts and Chennai as well.

Given the rains, 27 November has been declared a holiday for schools and colleges, including Tiruvarur, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, and Mayiladuthurai districts. A holiday has been declared only for schools in Chennai, Chengelpet, Ariyalur, and Kanchipuram.

According to the IMD's bulletin, the deep depression over the southwest Bay of Bengal is about 370 km southeast of Nagapattinam and 550 km south-southeast of Chennai.

The deep depression is very likely to intensify further into a cyclonic storm called Fengal on 27 November and heavy to very heavy rain at a few places and extremely heavy rain at one or two places is likely in Cuddalore and Mayiladuthurai districts.

Heavy to very heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu, Villupuram, Ariyalur, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Pudukkottai districts. *—PTI*

UP to make Sambhal vandals pay for damages

LUCKNOW, 27 NOV

The Uttar Pradesh government will make protesters involved in the Sambhal violence pay for damage to public property while posters of 100 "stone pelters" will be displayed at public places, an official said on Wednesday.

Sambal police has released several pictures of those involved in violence

In these photographs, nine persons were identified and help is sought from people to identify those who have masks on their faces.

Four people died and scores were injured in Sambhal on Sunday in violence over a court-ordered survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid in Kot Garvi area.

"The UP government is adopting a firm stance against the individuals involved in the Sambhal violence. Posters of the stone pelters and miscreants will be displayed publicly, and recovery of damages will be sought. A reward may also be announced for information leading to their arrest," the official said. So far, police have arrested 25 individuals and registered seven FIRs, which include charges against the Samajwadi Party's (SP) Sambhal MP Zia-ur-Rehman Barq, local MLA Iqbal Mehmood's son Sohail Iqbal and more than 2,750 unidentified suspects.

Police detain AISA members during a protest against UP government over Sambhal violence, in New Delhi on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Meanwhile, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday urged the Supreme Court to take cognisance of allegations that police threatened the family members of a victim.

In a post on X, he said around 20 policemen went to the house of Naeem, one of the four men killed in the violence, on the night of 25 November and warned the family members against talking to the media. *—PTI*

Jhansi hospital fire: Principal removed, 3 suspended

LUCKNOW, 27 NOV

Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday removed Jhansi medical college principal and suspended three staff members after a four-member committee submitted its report on the 15 November fire incident that claimed the lives of 10 children. The action was taken by Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, who also holds responsibility of the health department. The four-member committee was constituted on the instructions of Pathak, officials said. "Based on the committee's investigation, Principal Dr Narendra Singh Sengar has been removed from the post. Chief Medical Superintendent Dr Sachin Mahur was given a charge sheet," they said. The college's junior engineer (electrical) Sanjeet Kumar, NICU ward's nursing sister in-charge Sandhya Rai and chief superintendent Dr Sunita Rathore were immediately suspended, they said. *—PTI*

SC raps ED over conviction rate

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned the Enforcement Directorate (ED) over the low rate of convictions in money laundering cases, wondering for how long former West Bengal minister Partha Chatterjee, arrested over alleged irregularities in academic staff recruitment in the state, could be kept in jail.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan said Chatterjee has been incarcerated for over two years and the trial in the case was yet to commence.

"What will happen if we don't grant bail? Trial is yet to commence, there are 183 witnesses in the cases. Trial will take time... How long can we keep him? That is the question. Here is a case where more than two years have gone. How to strike balance in such case?" the bench asked Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, who represented the ED in the hearing.

PHOTO: PTI

The top court remarked it also couldn't ignore that the allegations against the former minister were serious in nature and asked, "Mr Raju, if ultimately he is not convicted, what will happen? Waiting for two-and-half to three years is not a small period. What is your conviction rate? Even if the rate is 60–70 per cent, we can understand. But it is very poor." Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi represented Chatterjee in the hearing. *—PTI*

ED raids Kwality ex-directors, promoters

ED on Wednesday conducted searches at multiple locations in Delhi as part of an alleged bank-loan-fraud–linked money laundering probe against former promoters of liquidated dairy major Kwality, officials said.he money laundering case stems from an FIR filed by the CBI against Kwality and its directors in September 2020 for allegedly cheating a consortium of 10 banks for over Rs 1,400 crore by through alleged bloating of financial statements and diversion of loan funds.

CARCASSES MUTILATED

2 African cheetah cubs found dead at KNP

SHEOPUR, 27 NOV

Two cubs born to African cheetah Neerva were found dead and their mutilated carcasses were recovered at the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday, an official said.

A team of forest staffers monitoring the movement of cheetahs received signals through radio telemetry about Neerva was away from her den, following which they along with veterinarians rushed to the spot for inspection and found mutilated carcasses of the two cubs inside, he said.

"After inspecting all possible places inside the boma, they concluded that no proof was found about the existence of any more cheetah cubs," the official said.

Confusion prevailed on Monday over the exact number

of cubs that Neerva gave birth to. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav had initially shared on social media that four cubs were born to her, but later deleted the post and said the forest department will confirm the exact number of the newborns soon.

"The samples of the dead cubs were collected and sent for examination. The exact cause of their death will be known once we get a lab report," he said, adding that all other adult cheetahs and 12 cubs are in a healthy condition. *—PTI*

WHO AFRICA DIRECTOR-ELECT DIES IN INDIA

ARUSHA, 27 NOV

The World Health Organisation's regional director-elect for Africa died while receiving medical treatment in India, Tanzania's parliament speaker said on Wednesday.

Plans to repatriate the body of Tanzania's Dr Faustine Ndugulile, 55, were underway, Speaker Tulia Ackson said, adding that funeral plans would be announced later. She didn't disclose Ndugulile's ailment.

Ndugulile served as a member of parliament for Kigamboni Constituency in Tanzania's commercial capital Dar es Salaam.

He was the country's health assistant minister between 2017and 2020 and information and communication minister until 2021.

He was elected as the WHO's African director in August and was set to start his new role in February 2025, following Dr Matshidiso Moeti who served in the role for two terms. *—PTI*

PHOTO: xxx

Five doctors killed in UP road crash

KANNAUJ, 27 NOV

Five doctors and a laboratory technician, all affiliated with the Uttar Pradesh University of Medical Sciences in Saifai, were killed in a road accident on the Lucknow-Agra Expressway early Wednesday, police said. The incident took place when a speeding SUV lost control and rammed into a divider, after which a truck then rammed into the vehicle. Superintendent of Police Amit Kumar Anand said that after hitting the divider, "the vehicle veered into the oncoming lane, where it collided with a truck. The four doctors and the lab technician died on the spot. One additional person, a PG student, suffered serious injuries and was rushed to Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Medical College in Tirwa." Police have sent the bodies for postmortem. *—PTI*

Five killed in road accident in Tamil Nadu

CHENNAI, 27 NOV

Five women were killed on Wednesday after a speeding car hit them on the highway off Mammallapuram, near here, police said. The five women were fatally knocked down when they attempted to cross the road after grazing cattle and having food, they said adding the driver of the car has been detained and a probe was on. *—PTI*

NO SUICIDE NOTE FOUND

AI pilot hangs self in Mumbai; boyfriend held

KOLKATA, 27 NOV

A 25-year-old female pilot of Air India allegedly hanged herself with a data cable at her rented flat in Mumbai following which police arrested her boyfriend on charges of abetment, an official said on Wednesday.

Srishti Tuli, who lived at the Kanakia Rain Forest building in the Marol area, died by suicide in the early hours of Monday.

Police took her boyfriend Aditya Pandit, 27, into custody on Tuesday after one of Tuli's relatives accused him of harassing and abusing her and forcing her to stop eating non-vegetarian food, the official citing the FIR.

According to the official from Powai police station, Tuli was from Uttar Pradesh and had been living in Mumbai for work since June last year. She and Pandit had met while pursuing a commercial pilot course in Delhi two years ago and got into a relationship.

The suicide came to light after

Pandit started his journey to Delhi by car. During the drive, Tuli called Pandit saying she would end her life. Pandit rushed to Mumbai and found the door of her flat locked from inside, the official said.

He then got the door opened with the help of a key maker and found Tuli hanging with a data cable. No suicide note was found in the house, the official said. Tuli's uncle later approached the police alleging that Pandit would harass her often and even humiliate her in public. Besides, he had also pressured her to change her food habits, claimed the relative, the official said. *—PTI*

₹1.5K CATHETERS SOLD FOR ₹4,000 AT WB HOSPITALS

KOLKATA, 27 NOV

The West Bengal health Department has launched a probe into the supplies of allegedly low-quality and locally made catheters at a high price to several government hospitals, posing a risk to the lives of patients undergoing treatment in these facilities, officials said.

Such central venous catheters (CVCs) were allegedly supplied to at least five medical colleges and hospitals in the state, defying allocation of international standard-compliant CVCs, they said.

The distribution company, which has been accused of supplying these catheters to government hospitals, admitted to the fault but placed the blame on its employees. The low-quality CVCs were supplied by a distributor in the Hatibagan area in the northern part of Kolkata for the last three to four months, he said. "Such kinds of local CVCs are priced around Rs 1,500 but the distributor took Rs 4,177 for each device," an official said. *—PTI*

Vaishno Devi ropeway row: 2 detained in fresh protest, FIR filed

KATRA/JAMMU, 27 NOV

Two representatives of labourers and shopkeepers in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi were on Wednesday detained after fresh protests at the Katra base camp against a proposed ropeway project along the trek route to the Vaishno Devi shrine.

Bhupinder Singh and Sohan Chand were released after an hour-long detention by the police.

Jammu and Kashmir Congress members, who met the divisional commissioner in support of the protesting shopkeepers, reached out to them in Katra to extend their support.

According to police, an FIR was registered against eight people on Tuesday, a day after violent protests in Katra in which a policeman got injured.

Protestors, led by Singh and Chand, took out a rally against the proposed ropeway project.

However, officials said the police stopped the protesters from moving ahead, resulting

People protest against a proposed ropeway project along the trek route to the Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu's Katra PHOTO: PTI

in clashes between them.

Singh and Chand were detained and taken away from the spot in a police vehicle, they said, adding that the protestors were also dispersed from the scene.

Udhampur DIG (Reasi range) Rayees Bhat said the detainees were not arrested.

The two men were released from the police station in Katra after an hour.

After the release, Singh said, "We called off the agitation following the intervention of the administration, which requested time to hold talks to resolve the grievances. We gave them time, but over the past two days, there have been arrests by the police. Several youths were detained." The Jammu and Kashmir Congress team led by Working President Ramnan Bhalla met the divisional commissioner in Jammu and took up the issue of him in bid to ensure its resolution. *—PTI*

NETFLIX DOCUMENTARY

Dhanush sues Nayanthara over 3-second clip

CHENNAI, 27 NOV

Tamil film industry actor Dhanush has filed a civil suit against actress Nayanthara Kurian, her husband director Vignesh Shivan, and their production house, Rowdy Pictures Private Limited, over alleged unauthorised use of clips from the film he produced in 2015 "Naanum Rowdy Dhaan" in the Netflix documentary 'Nayanthara: Beyond The Fairytale'. The case, brought by Dhanush's production house Wunderbar Films Private Limited, was heard at the Madras High Court on 27 November.

Justice Abdul Quiddhose has directed Nayanthara, Shivan, and others to respond to the allegations. Dhanush claims the documentary included behind-the-scenes visuals from 'Naanum Rowdy Dhaan' without his consent and has demanded Rs 10 crores for using three seconds of behind-the-scenes footage from the film. He also sought the inclusion of Los Gatos Production Services India LLP, a Netflix-associated entity, in the case.

'Nayanthara: Beyond The Fairytale', released on Nayanthara's birthday, 18 November, explores her career, struggles, and personal life. Before its release, Nayanthara accused Dhanush of holding a personal grudge in an open letter, calling him a "tyrant" after he denied issuing a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the use of the film's visuals. She claimed only brief, personally recorded footage was used in the documentary. 'Naanum Rowdy Dhaan' holds sentimental value for the couple as it marked the beginning of their relationship. *—Salar News*

LACK OF OXYGEN SUPPORT IN AMBULANCE KILLS WOMAN IN LABOUR

PALGHAR, 27 NOV

A 26-year-old pregnant woman in labour from Maharashtra's Palghar district died while being taken to hospital in an ambulance that was not equipped with oxygen and other necessary facilities, authorities said on Wednesday.

Pinki Dongarkar, resident of Sarni village, went into labour on Tuesday evening. Her family rushed her to Kasa rural hospital, but because of the critical nature of her condition, the staff there referred her to neighbouring Silvassa city (in the Union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu) for further medical attention. However, despite frantic attempts by her family to secure an ambulance equipped with oxygen and necessary medical facilities through the 108 emergency service, their requests went unanswered, a health official said. They were eventually provided with a regular ambulance by the Kasa rural hospital. However, the woman succumbed to complications while en-route to Silvassa. *—PTI*

STOP WAR ON WOMEN

Hundreds of activists from FEMEN, an international women's rights movement, staged a topless protest outside the Louvre in Paris, France, demanding an end to violence against women, marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The protest saw more than 100 topless women, with slogans such as 'Stop War on Women,' written in French, English, and Kurdish across their chests

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM@FEMEN_OFFICIAL

Is India facing a new kind of militancy in Kashmir?

On 3 November, a blast ripped through a bustling Sunday market in the heart of Srinagar in Kashmir. A 45-year-old woman, who was one of the 12 civilians wounded in the attack, succumbed to her injuries later in the hospital. Police later detained three men. According to authorities, they are associated with Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Though it was the first grenade attack in Srinagar in two years, it was just one of several militant incidents reported in Jammu and Kashmir in recent months. Some experts have called this uptick a "shift" in the militants' strategy, saying that the focus was moving southwards and away from the restive Muslim-majority Kashmir valley to the Hindu-majority Jammu. Some media outlets decried the attacks as part of a "new wave" and "renewed terror" in the troubled region.

In 2024, Jammu and Kashmir elected its first government since it was stripped of its semiautonomous status with the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. India and Pakistan both claim the entire strategically significant Himalayan region of Kashmir, which is currently divided, with different portions administered by India, Pakistan and China.

Some observers say the mostly peaceful election had irked militants, who Indian officials claim are backed by neighbouring Pakistan to foment violence in the region.

Officials in Pakistan have consistently denied such allegations.

"The elections frustrated terror groups and forced them to activate the sleeper cells to sabotage the democratic process," Ayjaz Wani, a strategic analyst based at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in New Delhi, told DW.

"The overall trend after 2006 has been a declining one. There is no reason to believe that there is any escalation," said Ajai Sahni, the executive director of the Institute for Conflict Management and South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP).

Some observers say the mostly peaceful election in Jammu and Kashmir had irked militants, who Indian officials claim are backed by Pakistan to foment violence in the region ***PHOTO: PTI***

According to numbers published by SATP, militancy-related deaths — which include civilians, security personnel and militants themselves — were at their lowest in 2012, when 121 fatalities were recorded. Peak fatalities were recorded in 2018 with 452 people killed. And this year, the death toll is so far equal to that of 2012.

Sahni dismisses media-fueled speculation about a militant surge as "hysterical."

Sahni also doubts that the attacks in Jammu represent a strategic change, saying fewer troops have been deployed there in the last decade, weakening the "security grid" that protected the area.

The decades long insurgency in Kashmir has seen increases and decreases in support among residents, including the 2015-2016 era of almost cultlike worship of young militant leaders such as Burhan Wani, which was fueled by social media.

But observers report that recruitment has dropped since then, and that the gap is being filled by "foreign militants" which is how Indian officials refer to guerrillas from Pakistan. "There is a sudden increase in foreign terrorists. As per reports of the intelligence agencies, there are about 120 terrorists operating in Jammu and Kashmir at the moment. Out of which, 80 are operating in the Kashmir valley and 40 in the Jammu region. Out of the 80 in Kashmir valley, 61 are foreign terrorists. Only 19 are local. In Jammu, roughly 35-36 are foreign terrorists. The major component right now is the Pakistani terrorist," Shesh Paul Vaid, former Director General of Jammu & Kashmir Police told DW.

Wani said "positive changes" in regional perception and enhanced security measures were the factors behind fewer residents joining the militancy. "For the past 30 years, Kashmir has been used by Pakistan and its military to distract citizens from domestic political and economic issues," he said.

"Many young people in Kashmir now feel that Pakistan has deceived them by exploiting religion," he said. "Ultimately, it is clear that Pakistan's support for terrorism is not because of its affinity towards Kashmiri Muslims, but it is owing to Pakistan's own geostrategic and geopolitical designs to hamper India's rapid rise on the global stage," he added.

Sahni said there was an effort to raise the domestic component in Kashmir's militancy from time to time.

"Right now local recruitment is at a very low level because the survival rate of terrorists today in the region is very low," he said.

But Vaid warns that foreign militants are likely behind the more recent attacks in the region.

—DW India

SALAR

Trump's deportation plan sparks fear in schools

Last time Donald Trump was president, rumours of immigration raids terrorised the Oregon community where Gustavo Balderas was the school superintendent.

Word spread that immigration agents were going to try to enter schools. There was no truth to it, but school staff members had to find students who were avoiding school and coax them back to class.

"People just started ducking and hiding," Balderas said.

Educators around the country are bracing for upheaval, whether or not the president-elect follows through on his pledge to deport millions of immigrants who are in the country illegally. Even if he only talks about it, children of immigrants will suffer, educators and legal observers said.

If "you constantly threaten people with the possibility of mass deportation, it really inhibits peoples' ability to function in society and for their kids to get an education," said Hiroshi Motomura, a professor at UCLA School of Law.

"The kids are still coming to school, but they're scared," said Almudena Abeyta, superintendent of Chelsea Public Schools, a Boston suburb that's long been a first stop for Central American immigrants coming to Massachusetts. Now Haitians are making the city home and sending their kids to school there.

Many parents in her district grew up in countries where the federal government ran schools and may think it's the same here. The day after the election, Abeyta sent a letter home assuring parents their children are welcome and safe, no matter who is president.

Immigration officials have avoided arresting parents or students at schools. Since 2011, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement has operated under a policy that immigration agents should not arrest or conduct other enforcement actions near "sensitive locations," including schools, hospitals and places of worship. Doing so might curb access to essential services, US Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas wrote in a 2021 policy update.

The Heritage Foundation's policy roadmap for Trump's second term, Project 2025, calls for rescinding the guidance on "sensitive places." Trump tried to distance himself from the proposals during the campaign, but he has nominated many who worked on the plan for his new administration, including Tom Homan for "border czar." If immigration agents were to arrest a parent dropping off children at school, it could set off mass panic, said Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles.

Balderas, now the superintendent in Beaverton, a different Portland suburb, told the school committee there this month it was time to prepare for a more determined Trump administration. In case schools are targeted, Beaverton will train staff not to allow immigration agents inside.

"All bets are off with Trump," said Balderas, who is also president of ASSA, The School Superintendents Association. "If something happens, I feel like it will happen a lot quicker than last time."

Many school officials are reluctant to talk about their plans or concerns, some out of fear of drawing attention to their immigrant students.

One school administrator serving many children of Mexican and Central American immigrants in the Midwest said their school has invited immigration attorneys to help parents formalise any plans for their children's care in case they are deported. The administrator spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Speaking up on behalf of immigrants also can put superintendents at odds with school board. "This is so speculative that we would prefer not to comment on the topic," wrote Scott Pribble, a spokesperson for Denver Public Schools. The city of Denver has helped more than 40,000 migrants in the last two years with shelter or a bus ticket elsewhere. It's also next door to Aurora, one of two cities where Trump has said he would start his mass deportations. Like a number of big-city districts, Denver's school board during the first Trump administration passed a resolution promising to protect its students from immigration authorities pursuing them or their information. According to the 2017 resolution, Denver will not "grant access to our students" unless federal agents can provide a valid search warrant. The rationale has been that students cannot learn if they fear immigration agents will take them or their parents away while they're on campus. School districts also say these policies reaffirm their students' constitutional right to a free, public education, regardless of immigration status.

—PTI

School administrators say that speaking up on behalf of the immigrant families can put them at odds with school board members ***PHOTO: X***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Hezbollah truce at risk amid fears of conflict escalating into Syria

The announcement of a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hezbollah is welcome news for a region torn apart by more than a year of warfare. Hopefully when implemented, the ceasefire will offer some respite for both Lebanese and Israeli civilians.

The deal came into effect at 4am local time on Wednesday. However, the previous 24–48 hours had seen a dramatic increase in violence on both sides. This is part of a well-established pattern in warfare in which fighting increases in intensity just before a ceasefire comes into force.

There are four questions and concerns about the current Israel–Hezbollah ceasefire.

What happens after 60 days?

The ceasefire agreement reportedly has 13 points that aim to stop the hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah for 60 days.

This would, in theory, allow for more than a million people displaced from southern Lebanon and more than 60,000 people displaced from northern Israel to return to their homes.

Returning Israelis to their homes in the north has been one of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's explicit war aims. Thousands of Israelis from the north have been housed in hotels across the country for more than a year at great expense to the government, so there is also a large economic incentive to make this deal happen.

However, given the relatively short timeframe and the fragile nature of the ceasefire, it remains to be seen whether civilians on both sides will take the opportunity to return home. While US President Joe Biden and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron have said the ceasefire will provide the basis for a "lasting calm", the terms of the ceasefire provide no details on what will happen at the end of the 60-day period.

The conflict could expand to Syria

A number of the terms are concerned with limiting Hezbollah's ability to rearm during the ceasefire. This includes the dismantling of all unauthorised infrastructure and weapons production facilities in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah's main patron, Iran, channels weapons to Hezbollah through Syria. The terms of the ceasefire raise the possibility that Israel will conduct more airstrikes inside Syria to ensure weapons from Iran do not reach Hezbollah.

While this is not explicitly authorised under the terms of the ceasefire or international law, the deal provides Israel with some justification for taking such action.

The ceasefire agreement reportedly has 13 points that aim to stop the hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah for 60 days ***PHOTO: X***

It can argue it is enforcing the terms of the ceasefire by not allowing Hezbollah to rearm via weapons shipments from Iran.

Already in the wake of the ceasefire announcement, Israel targeted sites on Lebanon's northern border with Syria for the first time, presumably as a way to curb Iran's influence.

Lack of detail on troop withdrawal

In many ways, the ceasefire is based on UN Security Council resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel.

It's ironic the terms of the ceasefire recognise the importance of this resolution when Israel has largely ignored several other UN resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

And arguably, resolution 1701 was never fully implemented by either Israel or Hezbollah. Another term of the agreement says Israel will gradually withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon over the 60-day period. During this time, Lebanese Army and state security forces will become "the only entities authorised to carry weapons or deploy troops" in the area south of the Litani River. Al Jazeera has reported that Israel insists Hezbollah dismantles and leaves southern Lebanon before any Israeli soldier withdraws. Another term of the ceasefire says the US will support indirect negotiations between Israel and Lebanon to achieve an internationally recognised delineation of their border. The explicit mention of negotiations suggests it may change as a result of the ceasefire. This could mean Israel may seek to retain and hold new territory as a result.

What about Gaza?

Netanyahu has said the ceasefire will enable Israel to focus its efforts on Hamas fighters in Gaza and his top security concern, Iran.

Other officials have called the ceasefire "a game-changer" that would show Hamas that the conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon were de–linked. Hezbollah had previously insisted it would not agree to a ceasefire until the war in Gaza ended. This new deal presumes this condition has been dropped.

Some have suggested a cease fire with Hezbollah may put additional pressure on Hamas to agree to a deal with Israel regarding the release of the remaining Israeli hostages it holds.

However, this overlooks the fact Hamas has been willing to make a ceasefire deal in the past, while the Israeli government has stymied negotiations by adding new terms at the last minute. The ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah should not take attention away from the fighting in Gaza, nor the horrific and dire humanitarian situation there.

It remains to be seen how the war in Gaza will play out. Will Israel move forward with a more formal occupation of parts of the enclave, as some have suggested? Or will the ceasefire with Hezbollah serve to isolate Hamas to the extent it feels it has even less to lose than it – and the Palestinians – already have?

—The Conversation

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Weinstein sues NY city for lack of medical aid in jail

NEW YORK, 27 NOV

Harvey Weinstein's lawyers filed a legal claim against New York City, alleging that he is receiving substandard medical treatment in unhygienic conditions while in custody at the notorious Rikers Island jail complex. The city is suing for failing to manage the former movie mogul's medical conditions, including chronic myeloid leukemia and diabetes, and negligence ranging from freezing conditions to lack of clean clothes. Rikers Island jail in New York City has been closed for a year due to legal claims by Weinstein's attorney, Imran H Ansari, whose 2020 rape conviction was overturned. Weinstein is suing for USD5 million in damages, claiming he was re-incarcerated before fully recovering, and the city's closure deadlines have been delayed. *—PTI*

Aus passes bill to ban kids under 16 from social media

MELBOURNE, 27 NOV

Australia's House of Representatives on Wednesday passed a bill that would ban children younger than 16 years old from social media, leaving it to the Senate to finalise the world-first law. The major parties backed the bill that would make platforms including TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, X and Instagram liable for fines of up to USD 33 million for systemic failures to prevent young children from holding accounts. The legislation was passed with 102 votes in favour to 13 against. If the bill becomes law this week, the platforms would have one year to work out how to implement the age restrictions before the penalties are enforced. Opposition lawmaker Dan Tehan told Parliament the government had agreed to accept amendments in the Senate that would bolster privacy protections. *—PTI*

Namibia votes for prez; could have its first female leader

NAMIBIA, 27 NOV

A 72-year-old woman who joined Namibia's independence movement in the 1970s is a strong contender to become its first female leader as the country votes in a presidential election on Wednesday. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, current vice president and SWAPO party candidate, leads after special early voting among overseas citizens and armed forces was announced. Namibia's presidential candidate, SWAPO, faces increasing frustration due to high unemployment and economic hardship, especially among young people. This has led to election upsets in other countries like South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, and Mozambique. Critics criticise party's unrealistic promise to increase job creation, while women's issues like reproductive rights, healthcare are likely to be high-profile. *—PTI*

ICC seeks warrant for Myanmar junta head

THE HAGUE, 27 NOV

The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor asked judges on Wednesday to issue an arrest warrant for the head of Myanmar's military regime for crimes committed against the country's Rohingya Muslim minority. Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who took power from elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a coup in 2021, is accused of crimes against humanity for the deportation and persecution of the Rohingya. Nearly a million people were forced into neighbouring Bangladesh to escape what has been called an ethnic cleansing campaign involving mass rapes, killings and the torching of homes. *—PTI*

IT'S BACK HOME...

...for Lebanese as ceasefire seems to hold

Israel says it reserves the right to strike Hezbollah if it violates the terms

BEIRUT, 27 NOV

A ceasefire between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah appeared to be holding Wednesday, as residents in cars heaped with belongings streamed back toward southern Lebanon despite warnings from the Israeli and Lebanese military that they stay away from certain areas.

If it holds, the ceasefire would bring an end to nearly 14 months of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, which escalated in mid-September into all-out war and threatened to pull Hezbollah's patron Iran and Israel into a broader conflagration. It could give some reprieve to the 1.2 million Lebanese displaced by the fighting and the tens of thousands of Israelis who fled their homes along the border with Lebanon.

The US- and France-brokered deal, approved by Israel on late Tuesday, calls for an initial two-month halt to fighting and requires Hezbollah to end its armed presence in southern Lebanon, while Israeli troops are to return to their side of the border. Thousands of additional Lebanese troops and UN peacekeepers would deploy in the south, and an international panel headed by the United States would monitor compliance. Israel says it reserves the right to strike Hezbollah should it violate the terms of the deal.

The deal would not address the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip, where Israel is still fighting Hamas militants in response to the group's cross-border raid into southern Israel in October 2023. Hours before the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon took effect, Israel launched broad strikes that shook the Lebanese capital Beirut and a volley of rockets from Hezbollah set off air raid sirens across a large swath of northern Israel.

But after the ceasefire took effect early Wednesday, quiet appeared to take hold, prompting waves of Lebanese to head home. *—PTI*

Displaced residents return to Dahiyeh, in Beirut, Lebanon, following a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

CONFLICT BY NUMBERS

	LEBANON	ISRAEL
THE DEAD	At least 3,800 killed.	At least 127 killed.
THE DAMAGE	$8.5B 100,000 houses destroyed.	$66B 5,683 acres burned.
THE DISPLACED	1.2M	46,500
THE STRIKES	Israel conducted 14,000+ strikes in Lebanon.	Hezbollah conducted 2,000+ strikes in Israel.

> I welcome the announcement of a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. I hope it can put an end to the violence and destruction both countries have been experiencing.
>
> —Antonio Guterres, UN Chief

> Everyone is coming to the table because of Trump. Trump's victory sent a clear message to the world that chaos won't be tolerated. Glad to see concrete steps towards deescalation in the West Asia
>
> —US president-elect Donald Trump's team

A burnt container which was used by leaders of Imran Khan's PTI party for a speech in Islamabad, Pakistan **PHOTO: PTI**

10 killed in Pak sectarian violence

PESHAWAR, 27 NOV

At least 10 more people have been killed and 21 others injured as sporadic clashes continued between Sunni and Shia tribes despite a cease-fire brokered between the two warring communities in Pakistan's restive northwest, police said on Wednesday.

The latest violence took place on Tuesday in Kurram district, bordering Afghanistan, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The clashes between Alizai and Bagan tribes in Kurram district started on Friday last week following Thursday's attack on a convoy of passenger vans near Parachinar in which 47 people were killed. At least 37 people were killed and several others injured in the tribal sectarian violence over Friday and Saturday, police said.

A seven-day ceasefire was brokered between the Shia and Sunni communities on Sunday following meetings between a provincial government delegation and elders from both sects.

However, despite the ceasefire, sporadic clashes are continuing, police said.

PTI party suspends protest

Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party on Wednesday formally suspended for the time being its protest here blaming the midnight crackdown by the authorities that left at least four dead and over 50 injured even as the PTI earlier claimed "hundreds" were killed in the violent clashes with security personnel.

Amid concerns about the whereabouts of Khan's wife Bushra Bibi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the party said they were at Mansehra town, near Abbotabad, of the northwestern province.

The midnight crackdown forced Khan's supporters to evacuate the D-Chowk and its adjacent main business district of the capital ending their protest, which his party described as a "massacre" under the "fascist military regime" even as police sources said about 450 protestors were arrested in the crackdown. *—PTI*

B'desh calls ISKCON fundamentalist body

DHAKA, 27 NOV

The Bangladeshi government has labeled the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) a "religious fundamentalist organisation" following a writ petition in the High Court demanding its ban. This comes amid nationwide protests over the arrest of Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari on Monday, who led rallies advocating Hindu rights in Chattogram and Rangpur. Das, previously affiliated with ISKCON, was detained on sedition charges for allegedly disrespecting the national flag during a rally. His arrest sparked protests, leaving at least 37 injured and resulting in the death of assistant public prosecutor Saiful Islam during clashes.

Meanwhile, 30 suspects were detained in Chattogram for their alleged role in Das's lawyer Islam's death and attacks on law enforcement. The interim government condemned the violence and pledged to uphold communal harmony, while urging calm. ISKCON denied allegations of extremism, and the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council has called for Das's release. Authorities suspect both domestic and foreign instigation behind the unrest. *—Agencies*

Lawyers of the Supreme Court in Dhaka protest against the murder advocate Saiful Islam Alif on Wednesday **PHOTO: DHAKA TRIBUNE**

Ex-B'desh PM Zia acquitted in graft case

Bangladesh High Court on Wednesday acquitted former prime minister Khaleda Zia in a corruption case in which she was sentenced to seven years in jail by a lower court. Zia was convicted in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case in 2018 by a Dhaka court. *—PTI*

CLIMATE FURY

PHOTO: X

4 DEAD, SEVERAL INJURED AS SRI LANKA FACES RAINS, FLOODS

COLOMBO, 27 NOV

Four people, including two children, have died and several others remained missing while over 2.30 lakh individuals were affected across Sri Lanka due to inclement weather following a massive rain system in southwest Bay of Bengal, authorities said on Wednesday.

At least six Colombo-bound flights were diverted to other airports on Wednesday morning due to heavy rain – 75 mm in 24 hours ending at 8:00 am – and high winds experienced in most parts of the island due to the Deep Depression (heavy rain bearing system) over the southwest Bay of Bengal.

Army and navy troops were deployed to rescue victims. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

RECORD SNOWSTORM HITS SEOUL, GROUNDS HUNDREDS OF FLIGHTS

SEOUL, 27 NOV

The most severe November snowstorm to hit South Korea's capital in more than a half century blanketed the capital on Wednesday, grounding hundreds of airplane flights and disrupting commuter traffic.

South Korea's weather agency said 20cm of snow fell in northern areas of Seoul. The storm covered the country, causing significant snowfall in central, eastern, and southwestern regions, causing 220 flights to be cancelled or delayed, and 90 ferries to remain at port.

Seoul experienced icy road conditions, causing morning commute delays and emergency workers to respond to fallen trees and signs. *—PTI*

LOCKDOWN CRITIC

Kolkata born Jay Bhattacharya to lead US health agency

WASHINGTON DC, 27 NOV

US president-elect Donald Trump has picked Indian-American scientist Jay Bhattacharya as the director of the National Institutes of Health, the country's top health research and funding institutions.

With this, Bhattacharya becomes the first Indian-American to be nominated by Trump for a top administrative position.

Earlier, Trump picked Indian-American Vivek Ramaswamy to lead the newly created Department of Government Efficiency along with Tesla owner Elon Musk. However, that is a voluntary position and does not need confirmation from the US Senate.

"I am thrilled to nominate Jay Bhattacharya, MD, PhD, to serve as Director of the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Bhattacharya will work in cooperation with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to direct the Nation's Medical Research and to make important discoveries that will improve Health, and save lives," Trump announced.

- He is known for his criticism of the Biden administration's handling of the Covid pandemic after it took power in January 2021

"Together, Jay and RFK Jr. will restore the NIH to a Gold Standard of Medical Research as they examine the underlying causes of, and solutions to, America's biggest Health challenges, including our Crisis of Chronic Illness and Disease. Together, they will work hard to Make America Healthy Again," he said.

Bhattacharya is a professor of Health Policy at Stanford University, a research associate at the National Bureau of Economics Research, and a senior fellow by courtesy at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, Stanford Freeman Spogli Institute, and the Hoover Institution, according to Trump. Bhattacharya is a co-author of the Great Barrington Declaration, an alternative to lockdowns proposed in October 2020. He is known for his criticism of the Biden administration's handling of the Covid pandemic after it took power in January 2021. During pandemic he advocated against lockdowns, arguing that they have impacts on physical and mental health. *—PTI*

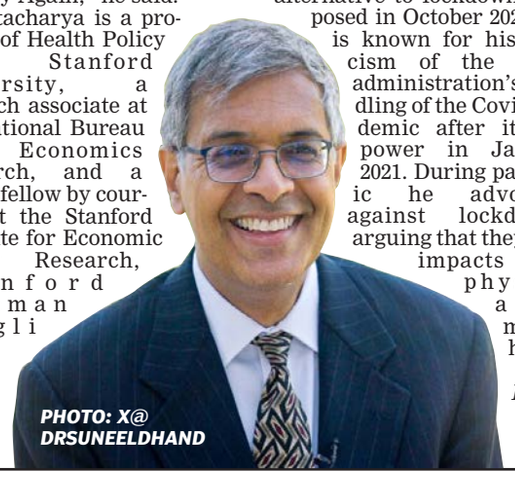


PHOTO: X@ DRSUNEELDHAND

TRUMP SIGNS MOU WITH BIDEN WHITE HOUSE TO BEGIN TRANSITION

WASHINGTON DC, 27 NOV

President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday reached a required agreement with President Joe Biden's White House to allow his transition staff to coordinate with the existing federal workforce before taking office on 20 January.

The congressionally mandated agreement allows transition aides to work with federal agencies and access non-public information and gives a green light to government workers to talk to the transition team.

But Trump has declined to sign a separate agreement because it would require that the president-elect limit contributions to USD 5,000 and reveal who is donating to his transition effort. The agreement is a critical step in ensuring an orderly transfer of power at noon on Inauguration Day, and lays the groundwork for the White House and government agencies to begin to share details on ongoing programs, operations and threats. *—PTI*

Gold gains ₹650; silver sees steepest single-day jump

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Bullion prices rebounded after two days of sharp fall with silver logging its steepest single-day gain of Rs 5,200 to hit Rs 95,800 per kg on Wednesday amid strong global trends and buying rush from local jewellers. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity climbed Rs 650 to Rs 78,800 per 10g in the national capital on Wednesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal had lost Rs 2,250 in the previous two straight sessions. It ended at Rs 78,150 per 10g on Tuesday. Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped Rs 950 to Rs 78,700 per 10g on Wednesday. Silver saw its steepest single-day jump of Rs 5,200 and regained the Rs 95,000 per kg level after a gap of two-weeks in the national capital. Earlier, the steepest one-day rise in silver price was recorded on 21 October when it had gained Rs 5,000. Traders attributed the increase in precious metal rates to volatile geo-political situation in the Middle East as well as the rising consumption in industrial and wearable segments in the domestic market. *—PTI*

Adani stocks zoom up to 20% as firm denies charges

The firms' combined market cap surged to ₹1,24,693.19 crore

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

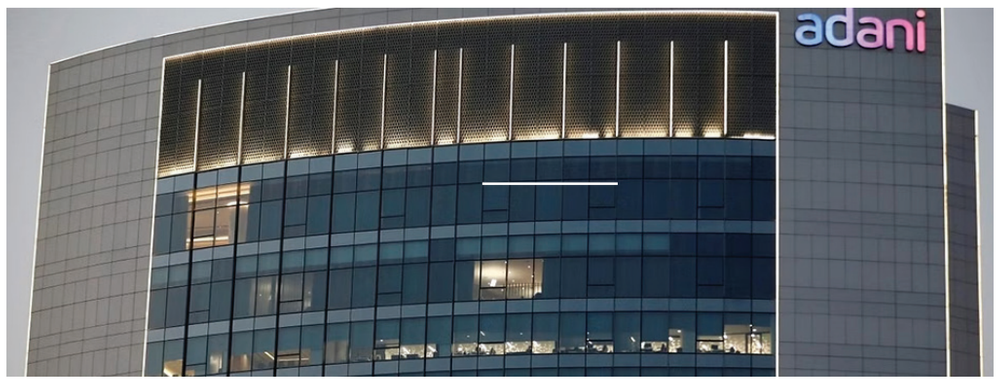
Shares of all Adani Group firms ended sharply higher on Wednesday, with Adani Total Gas and Adani Power soaring nearly 20 per cent, bouncing back from the previous day's fall.

The stock of Adani Total Gas surged 19.76 per cent, Adani Power soared 19.66 per cent, Adani Enterprises zoomed 11.56 per cent, Adani Energy Solutions jumped 10 per cent and Adani Green Energy climbed 10 per cent on the BSE.

Shares of NDTV jumped 9.35 per cent, Adani Wilmar rallied 8.46 per cent, Adani Ports surged 6.29 per cent, Sanghi Industries (4.73 per cent), Ambuja Cements (4.40 per cent) and ACC (4.16 per cent).

Helped by the rally in the stocks, the group firms' combined market valuation surged Rs 1,24,693.19 crore.

Adani Power, Adani Energy Solutions, Adani Green Energy and Adani Total Gas also hit their upper circuit limits during the day.



Adani Power, Adani Energy Solutions, Adani Green Energy and Adani Total Gas hit upper circuit limits ***PHOTO: PTI***

On Tuesday, shares of all Adani group firms ended lower, with Adani Green Energy tumbling 7 per cent.

Embattled billionaire Gautam Adani and his aides have not been charged under the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, an Adani Group entity said on Wednesday, adding that they faced three other charges, including securities and wire fraud that are punishable with monetary fines.

The US Department of Justice's (US DOJ) indictment filed in a New York Court last week does not mention Gautam Adani, founder chairman of the ports-to-energy conglomerate, his nephew Sagar, or Vneet Jaain in any count related to conspiracy to violate the FCPA, Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL), said in a stock exchange filing.

AGEL is at the heart of the allegation of USD 265 million bribes being paid to Indian officials to secure solar power sale contracts that could bring in USD 2 billion of profits over a 20-year period to the firm.

The three -- executives at AGEL -- have only been charged with securities fraud conspiracy, wire fraud conspiracy, and securities fraud, the company said.

In general, the penalties for such charges are less severe than bribery. *—PTI*

NIFTY UP BY 80 POINTS

Sensex rises by 230 points on gains in Adani stocks

MUMBAI, 27 NOV

Benchmark BSE Sensex climbed 230 points in a volatile session on Wednesday following gains in Adani group stocks and foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share index rose by 230.02 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at 80,234.08 as 18 of its shares closed in green and 12 in red. During the day, it surged 507.09 points or 0.63 per cent to 80,511.15.

In a see-saw trade, the NSE Nifty rose by 80.40 points or 0.33 per cent to 24,274.90. The index moved between a high of 24,354.55 and a low of 24,145.65.

Utilities, power, services and capital goods shares advanced while realty and healthcare stocks were the laggards.

NTPC, Bajaj Finance, Maruti and Axis Bank were among the other gainers.

In contrast, Titan, State Bank of India, Asian Paints, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Tech, Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank and ICICI Bank were among the laggards.

PHOTO: PTI

Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in equity markets on Tuesday which also bought strengthened the sentiment. FIIs bought equities worth Rs 1,157.70 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

"In Asia, market sentiment was mixed due to the potential tariff impositions by the US. Meanwhile, the Chinese market rebounded on expectations of additional stimulus measures," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. *—PTI*

Rupee plunges 15P to settle at 84.44 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 27 NOV

The rupee declined sharply by 15 paise to close at 84.44 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday amid uncertainties surrounding US President-elect Donald Trump's trade policies and an increase in crude oil prices. However, a strong show at the domestic equity markets, FII inflows along with a weakening dollar against major currencies supported the local unit at lower level, according to forex traders.At the inter-bank currency exchange, the rupee opened at 84.38, lower by 9 paise from its previous close, but declined to an intra-day low of 84.48 during the session. It settled at 84.44 (provisional), 15 paise lower than Tuesday's close of 84.29. According to analysts, US President-elect Donald Trump's indication of adopting aggressive trade policies added to the volatility in the currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.46 per cent at 106.51.*—PTI*

Honda Activa e-scooter and battery hub during the launch event in Bengaluru on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

In a first, Honda unveils 2 electric scooters

BENGALURU, 27 NOV

Japanese two-wheeler maker Honda Motorcycle & Scooter on Wednesday for the first time unveiled two electric scooters, 'ACTIVA e:' and 'QC1' here, marking the company's entry in the fast-growing domestic electric two-wheeler market.

Bookings for the latest offerings will commence from 1 January next year while the deliveries will start from February, Honda Motorcycle &Scooter India Ltd (HMSI) said without revealing the vehicles' prices. "The introduction of ACTIVA e: and QC1 marks a defining step in our commitment to sustainable mobility in India. It is in line with Honda's global 'Triple Action to ZERO' concept to realize carbon neutrality by 2050, which focuses on three areas: carbon neutrality, clean energy, and resource circulation," said Tsutsumu Otani, Managing Director, President & CEO, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India.

"With ACTIVA e:'s swappable battery technology and QC1's fixed battery set-up along with the industry-leading hassle-free ownership experience, we are striving to meet the diverse needs of our customers," said Yogesh Mathur, Director, Sales and Marketing, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India. *—PTI*

Mahindra to pump ₹4.5K cr into EV bikes

CHENNAI, 27 NOV

Mahindra & Mahindra has committed Rs 4,500 crore on the overall development, including the creation of production capacity, for the two new ground-up electric brands, a top company executive said on Wednesday.

The Rs 4,500 crore investment is part of the Rs 16,000 crore capex the company has announced for the electric vehicle business between the FY22-27 cycle.

The Mumbai-based auto major is creating production of capacity of 90,000 units per annum at its Chakan-based plant for the two ground-up 'Born Electric' models: BE 6e and XEV 9e.

The Mumbai-based auto major on Tuesday unveiled two models BE 6e and XEV 9e here with deliveries expected to commence in the February-March period next year.

The entry-level variants of BE 6e and XEV 9e are priced at Rs 18.9 lakh and Rs 21.9 lakh, respectively (ex-showroom).

The prices of other variants of the two models will be announced later.

The company said that the BE 6e comes with a range of 682 km while the XEV 9e features a range of 656 km. *—PTI*

IN FAIR PRICE SHOPS

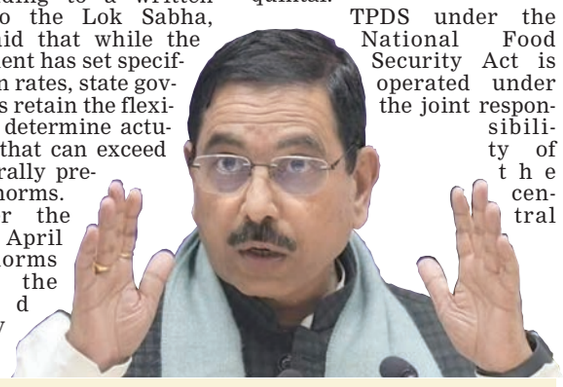
Govt will not hike margins for ration shop dealers: Joshi

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Food Minister Pralhad Joshi on Wednesday said the Centre has no immediate proposal to increase the margins for fair price shops (FPS) dealers under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

Responding to a written query to the Lok Sabha, Joshi said that while the government has set specific margin rates, state governments retain the flexibility to determine actual rates that can exceed the centrally prescribed norms.

As per the revised April 2022 norms under the Food Security (Assistance to State Governments) Rules, 2015, Rs 90 per quintal is the dealer margin, with an additional margin of Rs 21 per quintal for general category states. For the special category, the dealers' margin is kept at Rs 180 per quintal, with an additional margin of Rs 26 per quintal.



TPDS under the National Food Security Act is operated under the joint responsibility of the central and state governments. Joshi underscored that the operational responsibilities, including licensing, supervision and monitoring of fair price shops, rest entirely with state and Union territory governments.

The Centre only provides assistance to states and Union territories to meet the expenditure towards intra-state movement and handling of foodgrains and FPS dealers' margin under the NFSA.

The TPDS (Control) Order, 2015 provides states with two key provisions. One is the ability to fix and periodically review fair price shop owners' margins to ensure operational viability and the other is permission to allow sale of non-TPDS commodities to improve FPS economic sustainability. *—PTI*

India inks pact for solar projects in 4 nations

India will now execute new solar projects in Fiji, Comoros, Madagascar and Seychelles ***PHOTO: X/@MEAINDIA***

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

A Project Implementation Agreement has been signed between the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) on Tuesday to execute new solar projects in Fiji, Comoros, Madagascar and Seychelles, an official statement said. The Wilmington Declaration released at the Quad Leaders' Summit in Delaware in the US on 21 September stated that the Quad countries will work together, through policy and public finance, to operationalise their commitment to catalyse complementary and high-standard private sector investment in allied and partner clean energy supply chains, it said. On 26 November, the Project Implementation Agreement (PIA) was signed between the MEA and the ISA to execute the projects in these Indo-Pacific countries. The ISA, as the Project Implementing Agency, would provide programmatic assistance to Comoros, Fiji, Madagascar and Seychelles with financial support from India, according to the statement. *—PTI*

Icra downs volume growth forecast for cement industry

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Rating agency Icra has revised down its volume growth forecast for the cement industry to 4-5 per cent at 445-450 million tonne for the current fiscal on account of sluggish construction activity.

In July this year, Icra had forecast a year-on-year volume growth of 7-8 per cent, expecting a better pick-up in demand in the second half.

However, Icra has now revised its projection "on account of slower-than-expected ramp-up in construction activity across the housing and infrastructure sectors, post the General Elections," a statement said.

Besides, on a YoY basis, the operating profit margins declined by 375 basis points to 12 per cent in Q2 FY2025 and by 192 bps to 14 per cent in H1 FY2025 as prices remained under pressure due to muted demand and oversupply. *—PTI*

Paper industry flags below-cost imports

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) has expressed concerns over rising imports of virgin fibre paperboard from countries like China and Chile, saying that "below-cost" shipments are hitting local producers and threatening their investments.

The IPMA said that imports of virgin fibre paperboard (VFP), mainly used as packaging material for pharma, FMCG, and cosmetics products, have grown more than three-fold to 21,233 tonnes per month in the first six months of 2024-25 compared to the average 6,337 tonnes per month in 2021-22.

PHOTO: PTI

"In August and September of the current fiscal, imports have been over 30,000 tonnes per month, which is over 20 per cent of the total domestic demand," IPMA said in a statement while demanding a level-playing field for local manufacturers.

The situation is getting exacerbated by the rising imports from China and Chile and the impending threat of large-scale imports from Indonesia due to the recent capacity expansion of 1.2 million tonnes per annum mainly targeted at exports, the industry body said. *—PTI*

NBCC bags ₹316 crore contract in Odisha

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

State-owned NBCC Ltd on Wednesday said it has bagged a Rs 316 crore contract to upgrade school hostels in Odisha. In a regulatory filing, NBCC said it has been "awarded the work of Upgradation of Primary School Hostel (PSH) Under State Sector Scheme at various locations in the state of Odisha amounting Rs 316 crore (approx.)". The work order has been given by ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare Department, Government of Odisha. NBCC is into project management consultancy (PMC) and real estate business *—PTI*

Govt to launch auction of minerals in offshore areas

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

The government will on Thursday launch the first round of sale of mineral blocks in offshore areas with 13 mines across the Arabian Sea and Andaman Sea set to be auctioned. These mineral blocks consist of a mix of construction sand, lime mud, and polymetallic nodules. These minerals are critical for infrastructure development, high-tech manufacturing and green energy transition. The move assumes significance as it will lead to foray into the exploration and development of undersea mineral resources within its offshore area. *—PTI*

EY REPORT

'91% of firms to cut budget amid cost pressures'

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Cost pressures have emerged as the top concern for Indian companies, as 91 per cent companies are planning to reduce their tax and finance budgets, reflecting the impact of financial strain on corporate operations, said a EY report.

The survey by the professional services firm highlights that cost pressures are the top concern of the companies for the first time, with inflation and cost-cutting eroding tax and finance budgets.

At the same time, the survey highlights that tax functions face an increasing urgency to manage more complex and data-heavy tax responsibilities. New reporting requirements like BEPS 2.0's Pillar Two rules, are expected to have a significant bearing on the burden of tax and finance functions, it added.

The survey says cost pressures are the top concern of the firms ***PHOTO: X***

As per the report, the organisations are looking at alternate operating models, signalling a strategic shift in ways of running the tax and finance operations. Notably, 59 per cent of Indian companies are planning to change their tax and finance operating models, the report added.

In the context of shift in ways of working, the survey highlights a trend of tax skills being complemented very well by data and technology skills. However, there is extreme talent pressure witnessed at the same time. About 72 per cent respondents from India believe that fewer accountants entering the profession and retirement of senior tax and accounting professionals would be a significant disadvantage for the tax and finance function over the next five years, the report highlighted. *—ANI*

SpiceJet settles $5.6 million dispute with Aircastle

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Ireland-based aircraft lessor Aircastle has withdrawn its insolvency case against the budget airline SpiceJet after reaching a settlement of USD 5.6 million. The settlement was confirmed by both parties to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) in Delhi on Wednesday, and the tribunal approved the withdrawal of the case.

The dispute arose when Aircastle filed an insolvency plea in 2023, claiming that SpiceJet had defaulted on rental dues for leased aircraft. This case was part of a series of insolvency claims against SpiceJet by lessors and vendors. However, after raising Rs 3,000 crore through a Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP), the airline has managed to settle several disputes.

In October, SpiceJet resolved a USD 23.39 million dispute with Aircastle and Wilmington Trust SP Services for USD 5 million. Additionally, in October, the airline settled a $131.85 million claim with Horizon Aviation for USD 22.5 million. Despite these settlements, SpiceJet still faces ongoing insolvency claims from other lessors, including Sabarmati Aviation and JetAir 17, but none have led to insolvency proceedings so far.

SpiceJet is also expected to receive Rs 736 crore from a previous funding round, strengthening its financial position. The air-line plans to expand its fleet to 100 aircraft by 2026 and return 36 grounded planes to service by March 2025.

—Salar News with Agencies

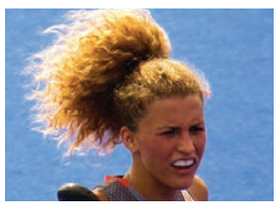


PHOTO: PTI

Women's HIL is a milestone for hockey: Verschoor

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Two-time Olympic gold medallist Dutch hockey striker Maria Verschoor believes the inaugural women's Hockey India League will be a significant milestone for the sport. "It's amazing to see the first competition of its kind for women in India, and to be part of it is truly special. The league's format, with a mix of international players from around the world, brings together different styles and cultures, which I think is great for the growth of women's hockey. "We will be playing some great matches, and I hope we can show the world how exciting and competitive women's hockey can be," Verschoor said in a release issued by HIL. Verschoor is particularly keen on contributing to the development of the women's game in India. "It's inspiring to see how the league is investing in women's hockey.—*PTI*

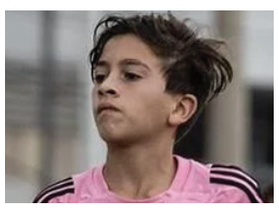


PHOTO: X

Messi's son debuts at Argentina youth tournament

BUENOS AIRES, 27 NOV

Thiago Messi, the eldest son of the Argentina star, has made his debut in the "Newell's Cup" tournament in the countryside city of Rosario. The 12-year-old Messi played with the No. 10 jersey of an Inter Miami youth team, which lost 1-0 on Monday to host Newell's Old Boys in the traditional under-13 competition. The team also played Tuesday. Lionel Messi took his first steps as a footballer in the Argentinian club in Rosario, 300 kilometers (186 miles) northwest of the capital Buenos Aires. Thiago's mother, Antonella Roccuzzo, and several members of his family, including grandparents Jorge Messi and Celia Cuccittini, were in the stands to watch him play. —*AP*

Ambiguity over wrestlers' participation in Nat'ls

BENGALURU, 27 NOV

Close to 100 wrestlers attached with the Indian Railways are fearing that they will miss out on competing at the National Championships, starting December 6, since their department has not yet clarified on sending entries for the crucial annual meet in Bengaluru. The ambiguity has even forced a few wrestlers to submit affidavits to the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) that they want to represent their respective states since the Railways had decided against sending teams for the nationals.—*PTI*

Ben reveals reason behind backing out from IPL 2025

CHRISTCHURCH, 27 NOV

England Test captain Ben Stokes said he opted out of the recent IPL mega auction to prolong his international career and focus on some important assignments such as the Ashes. The newly-framed IPL rule disallows a player to enter the mini-auction if he was not registered for the mega auction. A total of 52 English players went under the hammer in the auction held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia recently. "There's no hiding behind the fact that I'm at the back end of my career. It's about looking at what I've got ahead and making the decision that is right for me to be able to prolong my career as long as possible. —*PTI*

Gukesh outplays Liren on time in Rd3 for first win in WC

Meanwhile, Divith turned WC in Under-8 World Cadets Chess C'ship

SINGAPORE, 27 NOV

Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh clinched his first win over defending champion Ding Liren in the World Chess Championship, outplaying the Chinese on time control in the third round to draw level on points here on Wednesday.

Having lost the first game rather badly with black pieces, Gukesh struck gold thanks to his preparation which gave him a huge advantage on the clock as Liren spent a lot of time mulling his moves in the first phase of the game.Both players now have 1.5 points each after the second game ended in a draw on Tuesday."It feels great. The last two days I was happy with my play. My play today was even better, I feel good at the board and today I just managed to outplay my opponent which is always nice," Gukesh, who played with white today, said in the post-game press conference.By move 13th, the 18-year-old from Chennai had a lead of one hour on the clock as he had spent just four minutes compared to Liren's one hour and six minutes. With 40 moves to make in the first 120 allotted minutes without any increment, the complicated middle game had the desired impact on Liren and Gukesh was relentless in finding out some difficult yet perfect moves to increase the pressure.

Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh clinched his first win over defending champion Ding Liren *PHOTO: PTI*

India's Divith Reddy

Divith Reddy is now latest chess sensation

In November 2022, six-year-old Telangana prodigy Divith Reddy displayed a remarkable play in a challenging endgame to leave none other than India's World Championship hopeful, D Gukesh, "shocked" by his skill and composure. Two years down the line, Reddy now eight, has emerged as the latest Indian chess sensation by becoming the under-8 champion at the world cadet event in Montesilvano in Italy. Divith, who has a FIDE rating of 1784 points currently, won four matches on the trot, including the last two against higher-rated opponents, to finish in a three-way tie with compatriot Sattwik Swain and Ziming Guo of China. But the Telangana boy clinched the gold with a better tie-break score. —*PTI*

BEATS RISHABH PANT

Urvil hits fastest T20 100 by an Indian in 28 balls

INDORE, 27 NOV

Gujarat's wicketkeeper-batter Urvil Patel slammed the fastest T20 century by an Indian during his team's Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match against Tripura here on Wednesday, reaching the three-figure mark in just 28 balls.

This comes exactly a year after he smashed the second-fastest hundred by an Indian in List-A cricket.

The 26-year-old Urvil bettered Rishabh Pant's record for the fastest T20 hundred by an Indian. The India wicket-keeper had blazed away to a 32-ball century against Himachal Pradesh in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy in 2018.

Urvil's ton is the second-fastest in T20 cricket, only behind Estonia's Sahil Chauhan, whose hundred against Cyprus came in 27 balls.

Opening the innings, Urvil struck seven fours and 12 sixes on his way to an unbeaten 113 off a mere 35 balls, as Gujarat completed a chase of 156 in 10.2 overs.

Earlier in the week, Urvil had gone unsold in the Indian Premier League player auction.

Exactly on this day last year, after being released by Gujarat Titans, Urvil scored an unbeaten 41-ball 100 for Gujarat in their Vijay Hazare Trophy match against Arunachal Pradesh in Chandigarh. —*PTI*

Urvil Patel

Gavaskar credits Kohli's stance adjustment for success in Perth

PERTH, 27 NOV

Virat Kohli

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar feels a subtle adjustment to his batting stance in the second innings of the Perth Test helped Virat Kohli neutralize the Australian attack and rediscover his vintage form. Kohli arrived in Australia after a lean run of form across formats in recent months. His struggles against spin on turning tracks raised doubts about his spot in the team. However, he silenced his detractors by scoring his 30th Test ton in the first Test at Perth. It was his first hundred after the 121 against the West Indies at Port of Spain in July 2023. "His body was completely relaxed when he came into bat in the second innings. In the first innings, because India had lost two wickets early, he would have also been under pressure," Gavaskar said on Star Sports. "In that second innings, you could sense apart from changing that stance, I think he also got his legs, which were maybe just a little bit wider at the start. Just a little bit, maybe I'm thinking too much, but that little thing might have given him that height he wanted. Well, in Australia, on the bouncier pitches, you need that edge. "I liked that mid-wicket boundary that he hit off Hazlewood. That, to me, was not the easiest of shots. A straight drive is a little easier because your stance is like that, but just to open up a little bit and play that - that was all magic." Having gotten out on 5 in the first innings, Kohli brought all his technical expertise into play while dealing with the vagaries of variable bounce in the second essay as Australian bowlers. —*PTI*

SYED MODI INTERNATIONAL

PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen storm into second round

LUCKNOW, 27 NOV

Top seeds PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen advanced to the second round of the women's and men's singles respectively at the Syed Modi International Super 300 badminton tournament after registering straight-game victories here on Wednesday.

Two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu defeated rising shuttler Anmol Kharb 21-17, 21-15, while Lakshya, 2021 world championships bronze medallist, powered past Malaysian qualifier Sholeh Aidil 21-12, 21-12 in another match.

Sindhu, who is returning to the tournament after a two-year hiatus, will face compatriot Ira Sharma, who triumphed over Deepshikha Singh 21-13, 21-19 in her opening match. "I'm happy to be back here after two years. I couldn't play last year because of injury, but it feels great to be playing on home soil again," Sindhu said after her win. "I was playing against Anmol for the first time, and she did well. We've played together in the Asian Team Championships before, so I was confident. It was my first match, and I made some mistakes, but overall I'm happy with my performance."

Lakshya will next face either Ravi or Israel's Daniil Dubovenko.

"It's always great to play in front of the home crowd. I've competed here in the past, but right now, I'm focusing on my next match. My goal is to do well in the BWF tournaments and at the World Championships," said Lakshya, the 2022 Commonwealth Games champion. —*PTI*

Top seeds PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen *PHOTO: PTI*

India beat Thailand in Men's Jr AC Hockey Opener

MUSCAT, 27 NOV

Defending champions India started their men's junior Asia Cup campaign on a rousing note, thrashing lowly Thailand 11-0 in a lop-sided Pool A match here on Wednesday.

Besides India and Thailand, Chinese Taipei, Japan, and South Korea are the other teams in Pool A. Pool B consists of arch-rivals Pakistan, Malaysia, and Bangladesh, which hosts Oman and China.

Araijeet Singh Hundal (2nd minute, 24th), Arshdeep Singh (8th), Gurjot Singh (18th, 45th), Sourabh Anand Kushwaha (19th, 52nd), Dilraj Singh (21st) and Mukesh Toppo (59th) struck from field play for India, while Sharda Nand Tiwari (10th) found the net from a penalty corner. Rohit (29th) converted a penalty stroke for the winners.

India will next take on Japan on Thursday.

Firm favorites to lift the title, the Indians made a solid start to the tournament, scoring three goals in the opening quarter.

Araijeet started the scoring with a reverse flick on the near side which was later doubled by Arshdeep with an easy conversion on the rebound.

Later, Sharda Nand added another goal with a powerful down-the-line drag-flick in the 10th minute.

The Indians continued to put pressure on the Thai defence with repeated raids but the opposition goalkeeper Thawin Phomjunt made some brilliant saves to deny the rivals.

Gurjot made it 4-0 for India on the reverse but this time on the far side of the goalkeeper.

A minute later, Sourabh chipped on the far side of the Thai goalkeeper to extend the lead.

It was raining goals for India as Dilraj scored a brilliant field goal by deflecting a long pass in the back of the net.

Araijeet scored his second goal of the day with a brilliant tomahawk to find the top-left corner of the Thai goal in the 24th minute. —*PTI*

Man City blow 3-goal lead in Champions League

LONDON, 27 NOV

Manchester City's struggles continued as Pep Guardiola's side remarkably blew a three-goal lead to draw 3-3 with Feyenoord in the Champions League on Tuesday. At the same time, Bayern Munich beat Paris Saint-Germain to leave the French club in danger of elimination. There were also big wins for Arsenal, Atletico Madrid, Atalanta, and Bayer Leverkusen. However, the biggest drama came at the Etihad Stadium, where City cruised early in the second half with a three-goal advantage as they sought to end a run of five successive defeats in all competitions.

Erling Haaland opened the scoring from a penalty just before half-time, and Ilkay Gundogan's deflected shot made it 2-0 in the 50th minute.

Haaland struck again to make it 3-0, but Feyenoord's comeback began on 75 minutes when Anis Hadj Moussa took advantage of hapless defending to round goalkeeper Ederson and pull one back.

Substitute Santiago Gimenez

Feyenoord produced a stunning comeback from three goals down to draw with Manchester City *PHOTO: X / @MANCITY*

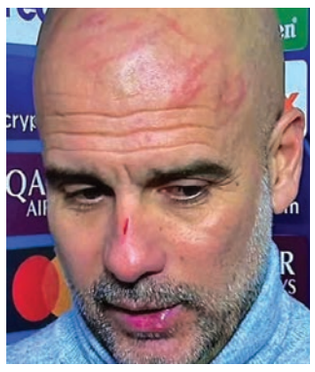


PHOTO: X

b "We lost a lot of games lately. We are fragile and of course, we need a victory." It is the first time a team has gone into the last 20 minutes of a Champions League game trailing by three goals and still avoided defeat, as the point boosts the Dutch side's hopes of progressing. City is two points outside the top eight places which offer direct qualification for the last 16, while Bayern moved above them by beating PSG 1-0 in Munich.

PSG had Ousmane Dembele sent off in the second half and the French champions have just four points, and three goals, from five games.

They are a lowly 26th in the 36-team league, a point adrift of the positions that offer a place in the play-off round in February. "We need to win our last three matches, otherwise we risk being eliminated," admitted PSG coach Luis Enrique.

Pep Guardiola injures himself

City looked set for a comfortable victory, with Erling Haaland scoring twice and Ilkay Gundogan adding another. However, Feyenoord staged a stunning comeback, netting three goals in the final 15 minutes. During the match, fans noticed Guardiola with a cut on his nose and scratches on his head. Social media buzzed with curiosity about the cause. The City boss later admitted the injuries were self-inflicted. "With my finger, yeah, with my nail," Guardiola explained, demonstrating the action. Smiling, he added, "I want to harm myself, yeah." —*PTI*

'DECLARATION OF INTENT' GIVEN

India submits bid to host U20 WA C'ships

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

The Athletics Federation of India has submitted a letter of intent to host the 2028 Under 20 World Athletics Championships, the sport's world governing body head Sebastian Coe told PTI on Wednesday.

World Athletics (WA) had, in August this year, invited bids for the 2028 and 2030 editions of the championships and Coe said he is happy that India has joined the process. I'm pleased to say that I take home a declaration of intent, a letter of application to join the bidding discussions for the 2028 Under-20 World Championships," Coe revealed. So, look, this is moving in the right direction (for India)," said the legendary former middle-distance runner, who has already met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya since arriving here.

World Athletic governing body head Sebastian Coe meets Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya *PHOTO: PTI*

He is currently in Mumbai and held meetings with representatives of Tata Communications, who are the broadcast rights holders of the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championships, featuring top-ranked athletes, to be held in 2026.Coe, who is a contender for the International Olympic Committee's president's post during the elections next year, added that if he is elected to the top post, athletes will be at the center of every policy the global body formulates. I'm working on a manifesto at the moment. And that manifesto is going to reflect the views of all my colleagues that I've spoken to and many of the critical stakeholders in the Olympic landscape, he said. The stakeholders consulted by Coe include the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and, international federations, commercial partners, broadcasters, and, the athletes. —*PTI*

Chalke, Niki to lead India A and B in U-19 tri-series

NEW DELHI, 27 NOV

Sanika Chalke and Nika Prasad will lead India A and B respectively in the Women's U-19 tri-series involving South Africa.The tri-series is scheduled from December 3 to 12. All games will be played in Pune, the BCCI announced on Wednesday.India A will take on South Africa A in the tri-series opener.India Women U19 A Squad: Sanika Chalke (C), G Trisha (VC), G Kavya Sree, Bhavika Ahire (WK), Joshitha VJ, Hurley Gala, Sasthi Mondal, Siddhi Sharma, Sonam Yadav, Gayatri Survase, Chandni Sharma, Happy Kumari, Shabnam, Bidisha Dey, Prapti Raval (WK).India Women U19 B Squad: Niki Prasad (C), Kamalini G (WK) (VC), Mahanti Shree, Ishawari Awasare, Mithila Vinod, Aayushi Shukla, Kesari Drithi, Parunika Sisodiya, Vaishnavi Sharma, Parshavi Chopra, Nandhana S, Anaadi Tagde, Anandita Kishor, Supriya Arela, Bharti Upadhyay (WK). —*PTI*